

Cabin Fever

A Historical Study of Nature Perceptions in Media Representations of Norwegian Cabin Tradition

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Master thesis in Culture, Environment and
Sustainability

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Abstract

Cabins have a special place in the hearts of Norwegians. A main aspect of cabins is their function as meeting places between nature and civilization. It is therefore meaningful to read the cabin as a symbol of Norwegian identity and nature relations. Cabins are however in transition, and the objective of this thesis is to gain better awareness of the evolution of cabins in Norwegian culture and what this evolution might signify in terms of Norwegians' understandings of nature. This thesis provides a qualitative semiotic analysis of nature in Norwegian cabin representations in selected media. It aims to answer the following research question: What is the role of nature in Norwegian mass media cabin representations in the 1960s and today (2013-14)?

This thesis provides a semiotic analysis of selected media: a cabin issue of *Bonytt* (1963), six articles in *A-Magasinet* (1964-67) and three issues of *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014). This semiotic study is coupled with a phenomenology inspired theoretical framework: Tim Ingold's (2014) Dwelling Perspective, an alternative theoretical framework to understanding modern life as a negotiation between the dwelling and commodity perspectives. By applying this framework I attempt to offer an analysis of cabin representations of nature experiences in my data. I hope my findings can offer better insight in terms of Norwegian understandings of nature and contribute to a broader generic discourse of dwelling in modernity.

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1 Introduction

Imagine you are sitting in a car on the country road, endless views stretching ahead of you. The children are in the backseat playing with an iPad and you look forward to a weekend of peace in Norway's nature. In other words, it is Thursday afternoon somewhere outside Oslo and you are on your way to the *hytte* (cabin). In Norway it has become increasingly acceptable to extend weekend trips to cabins by taking Fridays off work – and many Norwegians do. Data from the Norwegian Statistical Bureau suggest that there is a slight increase in people who spend time at their cabins on Fridays, and that the time spent at cabins on Fridays has on average increased by 4 hours (Egge-Hoveid 2012). One of the hottest topics in the Norwegian media is whether or not Thursday has become the new Friday, at times turning to a debate about the potential laziness of the Norwegian people (Egge-Hoveid 2012). The media buzz around cabins might appear misplaced for someone unfamiliar with Norwegian culture, but the cabin is an important topic to Norwegians. Moreover, amongst a population of 5 million there are now 419 246 private cabins in the Norwegian landscape (Statistics Norway 2015). In addition, the Norwegian Tourist Association (DNT) had by 2013 built 499 cabins in total – smaller versions of cabins for emergencies and recreation purposes included – shared by over 250 000 members (DNT Årsrapport 2013).

In a Norwegian context, the cabin as an object of study is as rich in meaning as it is deeply rooted in Norwegian identity – and considered a transitional place between man and nature (Rees 2014). But the cabins are themselves in transition (Haugen 2008, Vittersø 2007, Berker *et al.* 2011). In line with rapid socio-economic growth, cabins have become bigger and more expensive, and the process of leaving your usual home for your cabin is made easier with advanced technology and other upgrades. A great proportion of cabins are now the same size and standard as normal housing (Jørgensen 2011). Cabins are helpful points of access to study the evolution of Norwegian identity. As will be further elaborated, Norwegian identity is interconnected with nature, and the concept of 'life in the open-air' (*friluftsliv*) stands strong in the Norwegian idea of well-being (Reed and Rothenberg 1993). At the cabin, Norwegian identity is negotiated in contact with nature. In short, studying the cabin might strengthen our knowledge of the relations between Norwegian identity and experiences in nature (see Figure 1).

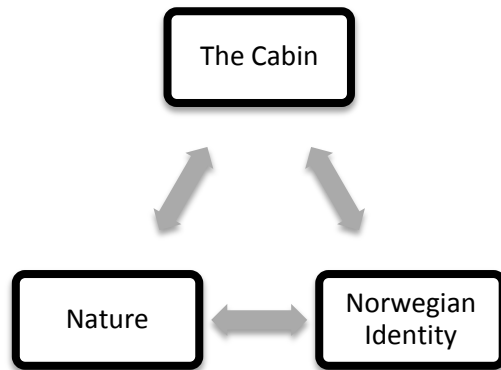


Figure 1: Triangle: The cabin, nature and Norwegian identity.

At the same time the world is facing a global climate crisis. Despite its ‘best’ intentions (I suggest this is only a claim), Norway has not come far with a solution. Recently, however, there is a new term: ‘the green shift’ (*det grønne skiftet*). Essentially, Norway now prepares for this shift in politics, industry, economy and everyday life. Fundamental to this shift is a constant search for persuasive narratives about sustainable living. Norway has a long tradition of nature experiences and conservation, but commitment from the civic and political spheres seems to be lacking. In this thesis I further study the cultural foundations for a ‘green shift’ among fellow Norwegians. His royal highness, the Norwegian Crown Prince has stated that there are three necessary steps to a green modern life:

- (1) First that we find a way back to ourselves and recognise that we are part of nature;
- (2) Second, that we obtain knowledge and pass it on in the best possible ways. That gives us the foundation to make the best possible decisions at all times;
- (3) Third, we have to find motivation and inspiration to find cool, brilliant, and future-oriented solutions that make our lives better while at the same time bringing balance to our lives (HRH Crown-Prince Haakon 2015, my own translation).¹

The cabin can be seen as belonging to the third step; appealing sustainable narratives. In this thesis I use “the term modern to relate to the emergence of the culture of the

¹ Original text: “For det første at vi finner tilbake til oss selv og erkjenner at vi er en del av naturen; (2) For det andre at vi skaffer oss kunnskap og formidler den på en best mulig måte. Det gir oss grunnlaget til å ta avgjørelser som er best mulig til enhver tid; (3) For det tredje må vi finne motivasjon og inspirasjon til å finne kule, skinnende og framtidsrettede løsninger som gjør livene våre bedre samtidig som det bringer oss i balanse» (HRH Crown-Prince Haakon 2015)

industrial countries” as a contrast to “premodern” and “postmodern” cultures (Naess 2008a:280).

This thesis provides a qualitative analysis of the relations between nature, cabins and Norwegian identity by applying a semiotic analysis of cabin representations in selected Norwegian media from the 1960s, as well as 2013 and 2014. For clarity, the term cabin is intended to represent the Norwegian term *hytte*, that is here understood in terms of Hall and Müller’s reading of the concept of the cottage that: “does not primarily address the physical form but the function of the second home usually referring to small houses that are mainly for recreational use” (Hall and Müller 2004:5). In its physical form, a cabin can be defined as “a small house or shelter, usually made of wood” (Wehmeier *et al.* 2005:208). The definition provided by Hall and Müller is more appropriate for this thesis, however, as this definition incorporates the typical Norwegian understandings of the *hytte* as a building associated with a certain set of practices and surroundings. Furthermore, the broader definition of the term cabin is especially relevant today, as cabins need not be small to be considered cabins. The debate on nature in relation to cabins most often takes one of three directions.² The first concern is nature conservation and the impact of the cabin building itself on the local environment. This debate has two main interpretational clusters: (1) An anthropocentric concern for cabins’ impact on people’s ability to experience nature. Inherent in this argument is the foundational idea of life in the open air (*friluftsliv*) as a base for Norwegian understandings of well-being. In this sense the cabin is paradoxical, as it on the one hand provides access to vast areas of nature, yet simultaneously deprives people of such experiences by influencing the local environment and using land for private property. In 1957 the public right to roam (*Allemannsretten*) was instated confirming that everyone has the right to move freely in forests, open country and other areas of nature, irrespective of the land or property owner (The Norwegian Environmental Agency 2014). (2) A bio-centric concern regarding the environmental impact of the cabin and cabin-related activities on the local ecosystem. Here efforts have also been made by the authorities to decrease this impact by way of nature preservation. The second debate concerns global environmental issues. One concern is emissions caused by a high level of consumption at the cabin, the commute and other forms of energy use. Yet, some aspects of modern facilities decrease

² Nature is here understood as “all the plants, animals and things that exist in the universe that are not made by people” (Wehmeier *et al.* 2005:1016).

the level of pollution and may have a positive effect on the local environment. It is argued that cabin villages are more environment friendly than cabins spread throughout the landscape (Berker and Gansmo 2011). Furthermore, Johnsen observes that each individual owner's concept of cabin life differs regarding use of technology at the cabin, but that the motivation for electricity use was to maintain standards of cleanliness and comfort (Johnsen 2011:89). Amongst new cabins built after 2000, one-third are built away from water and electricity grids. In 2011 one in four cabins was built to the standard of normal housing (Støa *et al.* 2011:55).

The compulsion to upgrade and to re-create the Norwegian cabin as a luxury vacation home is the first really radical reconceptualization of what cabins signify, and it remains to be seen where this development takes us (Rees 2014:183).

The above quotation is borrowed from Ellen Rees' book on cabin representations in Norwegian literature, and provides a nice introduction to the third concern: whether the shift in thinking about the cabin signifies a new set of relations to nature. As the cabin is considered the main meeting place between nature and civilization in Norway, it is important to obtain more knowledge of the phenomenon and what it signifies. This is especially important as the cabin can be read as a symbol of Norwegians' mind-set about nature. Furthermore, in the 1960s, advocates for modernization, with architects and planners in the lead, already claimed that people would argue that "mountain planning after those guidelines put forward here, with plans of regulation, statute and control, would deprive people of the real, healthy and uncomplicated joy of mountainous nature and cabin life" (Langdalen 1965 as cited in Jørgensen 2011:47 my own translation).³ With such upgrades, often at a high level of luxury, cabins seem to carry different meanings than the simple and spartan cabins of the post-war period. This thesis attempts to locate any new tendencies in the Norwegian cabin culture and to critically assess what implications this might have for conceptualizing nature in modern Norway. Norwegian cabin culture is, like the people who occupy them, diverse and therefore difficult to study. It is nevertheless necessary to get a better understanding of the changing relations between cabins and nature.

³ Original text: «innvende at fjellplanlegging etter de retningslinjer som her er skissert, med reguleringsplaner, vedtekter og bygningskontroll, vil berøve folk den ekte, sunne og ukompliserte glede ved fjellnatur og hytteliv» (Langdalen 1965 as cited in Jørgensen 2011:47).

Therefore, this thesis studies current and previous experiences in nature through the lens of the mass media in a comparative study of current times (2013 and 2014) and the 1960s – also referred to as the “golden age of cabin therapy” (Rees 2014:117). Based on the findings of her research on cabin representations in Norwegian literature from the 1800s to today, Rees found that “the vacation cabin as a retreat has become so fully integrated into the rhythms and patterns of Norwegian life, that everyday life in turn has started to follow people back to the cabin when they attempt to retreat from it” (Rees 2014:178). Following Rees, my hypothesis is that the way nature is represented at the cabin has changed from being ‘familiar’ to becoming something ‘distant’ since the 1960s in line with socio-economic developments.

Research has already been conducted on the motivations of cabin ownership and what owners do at their cabins. This thesis attempts to move the focus from perceptions of cabin owners to a less studied aspect of Norwegian cabins: media representations. The thesis poses the following research question: *(1) What is the role of nature in cabin representations of Norwegian mass media in the 1960s and today (2013-14)?* To articulate this question, this research attains to the following sub-questions: *(2) How has the meaning of the cabin evolved since the 1960s? (3) How is the cabin represented in selected media? (4) Which tendencies associated with outdoor activities and life can be observed in cabin representations in Norwegian magazines from the 1960s and 2013-2014, and how are these narrated? (5) How is nature represented in these texts? (6) What do these findings suggest in terms of the wider context of Norway, cabins and nature in modernity?* It is important to note that this is a study of cabin representations, and not cabins as such. The research presented here is an attempt to extract meaning from mass media representations of cabins, as an attempt to deepen our understanding of categories for understanding nature in the 21st century.

1.1.1 The Cabin as a Symbol of Norwegian Identity

This thesis considers the cabin as a symbol of Norwegian national identity. Niedermuller has provided a useful relational definition of identity:

The notion of identity means the psychological-cultural process during which an individual or group becomes part – creator and practitioner – of his/her or its own lifeworld. It means he/she or it can fit into a given lifeworld without difficulty and can easily use the shared knowledge as

essence of his lifeworld. Identity reflects the relation between the individual or group and the surrounding lifeworld created by them. (Niedermuller as cited in Hodne 2002:18-19)

Following this definition, national identity is understood here as the psychological-cultural process during which the individuals or groups become part – creator and practitioner – of a nation’s own lifeworld. As a symbol of the Norwegian identity, the cabin represents a locus of meaning to Norwegians. To understand this we look to 1814, the year Norway got its independent constitution as a state. After dissolving a long-lasting union with Denmark, there was in 1814 a longing for an independent Norwegian identity. In contrast to other European countries emerging around the 1700 and 1800s, Norway, as with Ireland and Belgium, came from the dissolution of a union, and thus lacked high culture that could foster feelings of identity. Norway had become a state, but had no nation. The beautiful Norwegian nature and people became the natural starting point to build a common sense of belonging based on a foundation of cultural memory. Thus, Jacques Rousseau’s ideas of freedom, equality and liberty praising the human and nature became firmly planted in Norwegian culture in a nation isolated from the urban high culture reigning over other European countries (Hodne 2002:24). As formulated by Hodne, “the starting-point, the conception of what was Norwegian, was nature, history and the recognition of a Norwegian farming community” (Hodne 2002:32, my own translation).⁴ Thus, Nina Witoszek argues that Norwegians are a “*naturstamme*” which can be translated to ‘a tribe of nature’ (Witoszek 1998:14). Furthermore, the evolution of the Norwegian nation started with the people and this is rooted in folk culture. Bausinger articulates the holistic process of nation-formation according to Herder’s principle of *Volksgeist*:

‘*Volksgeist*’ meant the spirit of the people and aimed at the vision of a new political order in which different people would establish their unity and clear demarcations from other people. It is well known how influential this idea was for the national struggles in Central and Eastern Europe – or to put it in a less idealistic way: how precisely Herder anticipated the true development in his theory. And it is also well known that this idea of ‘*Volksgeist*’ became a challenge and an incentive for folklorists: they started to collect what they looked at as popular antiquities in order to

⁴ Original text: “Det man hadde å gå ut ifra som genuint Norsk var natur, ved siden av historien og vissheten om en norsk bondestand” (Hodne 2002:32).

support the new organic concept by traditions allegedly evolving over the millennia (Bausinger as cited in Hodne 2002:25).

In Norway this process was highly influenced by ambitious souls who went on missions to gather cultural memory in the Norwegian valleys. Folktales were gathered first by the Grimm brothers and later more extensively by Asbjørnsen and Moe, while Ivar Aasen gathered linguistic ideas for a New Norwegian written language (*nynorsk*). It is clear that farmers were important sources in this process. Furthermore, Hodne identifies four groups that were central in shaping a Norwegian identity: The “economic” and “military” elites, the “political/bureaucratic/diplomatic” elites, “intellectuals” and “artists” (Hodne 2002:29). Also at this time Norway had less class inequalities than other European countries, and the division within the ‘elites’ and between the elite and the people (including farmers) was not that significant (Hodne 2002:29). In other words, nation-building was an inclusive process, as the middle-class actively took part in shaping a cultural political platform by and for the citizens (Hodne 2002).

Furthermore, the cabin was a central arena in this process, and is still an important carrier of Norwegian identity. Culture is used here in its broad sense as “the custom and beliefs, art, way of life and social organization of a particular country or group” (Wehmeier *et al.* 2005:373). Moreover, it is important to make clear that Norwegian cabins construct a heterogeneous landscape and do not conform to one conformed cabin ideal. Each Norwegian cabin is reinvented by different circumstances, with individual cabins subscribing to a certain ideal – an ideal based on cultural memory, embodied in the idea of the cabin shared by Norwegians, but also shaped by the owner’s personal preference and circumstance. Indeed, the Norwegian cabin is reproduced through generations as a response to the wider social, cultural, economic and political contexts, and it becomes more appropriate to understand the cabin as national meme than a fixed idea - a carrier of Norwegian social and cultural memory through time. Witoszek defines a meme semiotically as “a unit of social memory (stemming from the Latin *mem-oria*): an image, a social pattern or a story which is not copied, but remembered and hence constantly re-invented in the process of recollection” (Witoszek 2011:17). According to Witoszek, national memes have four main characteristics that make them important:

First, they occur in different cultural contexts. Second, they originate from and define the national community’s anchoring; they are stapled by the

location of the nation (or lack of it). Third, they stimulate response in society (that says that they awaken either negative or positive involvement amongst natives). Finally, they order the community's past, at the same time as they create categories for understanding and to respond to new challenges (Witoszek 1998:167-8, my own translation).

Considering the first, the cabin appears in a multitude of cultural contexts in Norway. To give some examples, the cabin is often represented in *friluftsliv*, social debate, politics, crime fiction obituaries, organizational life, film and literature. With regards to the second, the cabin has a central position in the anchoring of Norwegian community and played an active role in the nation-building process, especially in the period around 1814 when Norway got its constitution, and is still actively utilized today (Rees 2014:181). The same can be observed with the rapid increase of cabins in the years following the Second World War (Rees 2014). The third characteristic, that a national meme triggers response in society, strongly corresponds with Norwegian cabin culture. Rees identifies this as a "strict ethos" (Rees 2014: 5). This ethos might vary in different cases, but is always present. As previously mentioned, this especially relates to ethics concerning the cabin and nature. As a national meme, the cabin also confirms to Witoszek's fourth criterion: The cabin creates categories for responding to and to understand past and future challenges. This makes the cabin a rich carrier of meaning. As to the climate crisis, for example, the cabin creates a place to develop environmental ethics or just simply awareness of environmental processes and changes. The cabin may influence the way we construct our homes (Gullestad 1990; Gullestad 1992) and how we participate at social arenas (Berker *et al.* 2011:11). Similarly the cabin is interlinked with the Norwegian response to shortage, such as the oil crisis when the King of Norway took the tram on his way to skiing, a demonstration of a classless frugal ideal often associated with the cabin culture. According to Witoszek there is also a final criterion for which an image or a specific history is a meme: "whether the object catches and expresses the way a society's beliefs and opinions, fear, involvement and desires are experienced today", in some way it must function as "a carrier of the destiny of a nation" (Witoszek 1998:168, my own translation).⁵ It would be difficult without drawing any assumptions to map out the agency of the cabin in shaping Norway's

⁵ Original text: «hvorvidt objektet fanger og uttrykker den måte et samfunns tro og meninger, frykt, engasjementer og lengsler oppleves på i dag. For å bli et 'nasjonalt mem' må et bilde, et symbol, en myte eller en rite fungere så å si som bærer av nasjonens skjebne» (Witoszek 1998:168).

destiny. Yet, as a place where Norwegian life is negotiated, Norway's destiny is, *inter alia*, carried by the cabin.

It is as if the cabin in some way constitutes a Norwegian utopia. Despite its "strict ethos", Rees reminds us, it is important to keep in mind the relatively short span of time the cabin has been part of Norwegian culture, and that it is "arguably already starting to disappear" (Rees 2014:5). The cabin tradition might be more vulnerable than Norwegians would like to think. In contrast with the atavistic heritage of other European countries, Norwegian pride is situated in nature and the transitional quality of the cabin: "Nostalgia and a sense of atavistic longing, a longing for an imagined past that never was, are key features of Norwegian conceptualizations of the cabin" (Rees 2014:5). As argued in the reading of Rees by Berker *et al.*, the cabin can be considered a Norwegian utopia, a place to strive towards, where 'Norwegian-ness' is at its best (Berker *et al.* 2011:10). This "strict ethos" makes the cabin a unique object of study in the Norwegian context. As formulated nicely by Berker *et al.*: "Despite – or rather because of – its relative marginality, an analysis of the cabin's diverse past, current and future offers a splendid opportunity to emphasize central cultural and social distinctive features of today's Norway" (Berker *et al.* 2011:10 – my own translation).⁶ As observed by Witoszek, "one cannot study 'the Norwegian soul', but one can study the history and images that have influenced Norwegians for generations" (Witoszek 1998:167).⁷

1.2 State of the Art in the Cabin Research

With the central position of cabins in culture and nature one would expect a lot of research on cabins in Norway, but according to the Norwegian Guild of Research there is still lacking knowledge on this phenomenon (The Norwegian Research Council 2010). As mentioned earlier, authors such as Rees and Witoszek discuss the relations between Norwegian identity and nature, and argue that the cabin may be considered a symbol of Norwegian identity and a transitional place between nature and civilization. In addition, the consumption patterns of cabin owners in Norway have been the subject

⁶ Original text: «til tross for – eller nettopp på grunn av – sin relative marginalitet tilbyr en analyse av hyttas mangfoldige fortid, nåtid og framtid en enestående mulighet til å kaste lys over sentrale kulturelle og sosiale særtrekk ved dagens Norge» (Berker *et al.* 2011:10).

⁷ Original text: "Man kan ikke studere 'den norske sjel', men man kan studere historier og bilder som har påvirket generasjoner av nordmenn" (Witoszek 1998:167).

of previous research including Haugen (2008), Støa *et al.* (2011), Vittersø (2007) and Aall (2011) (energy consumption), who all point towards increased consumption in Norwegian cabins. Research has also been conducted on cabin owners' own perceptions of the life at their cabins. According to Kaltenborn (1998) there are three main motives behind cabin ownership: (1) identity management (contrast to modern, everyday life, status symbol); (2) recreational and psychological 'maintenance' (contact with nature, social networks); and (3) pragmatic reasons (capital investment, life phase, child-friendly, relatively inexpensive holidays) (as cited in Bjerke *et al.* 2006:89). As we can see, the cabin is perceived as a break from everyday life that allows for 'contact with nature,' a state associated with well-being (recreation and maintenance). Meanwhile Bjerke *et al.* (2006) investigate whether or not cabins are still associated with a second home in nature and why people still seek nature experiences. Their hypothesis is that nature experiences encourage favorable mental states. Through a survey and interviews they ask cabin owners what are the most important reasons to keep a cabin (Bjerke *et al.* 2006:93). They find that cabins are valued as places for restoration, and that the main reason for cabin ownership is "to have a place to come in contact with nature" (Bjerke *et al.* 2006: 95,101). Based on their own findings, Støa *et al.* (2011) support these conclusions from their own survey and qualitative interviews where they attempt to identify the motives for cabin ownership and which values they represent. They find that the following activities reoccur in people's answers: "physical activities outdoors such as skiing, mountain hikes and fishing, social activities with family and friends and relaxation and withdrawal generally, for example to read, watch a movie and listen to music" (Støa *et al.* 2011:57). Based on these findings they conclude that "the general pattern from both interviews and the survey is that the utility model has not changed much. The main motive for going to the cabin is to get a break from everyday life (Støa *et al.* 2011:57). Kaltenborn *et al.* (2005) have done extensive research on motives, feelings, activities and views of nature amongst Norwegian cabin owners. They find that closeness to nature and recreation are the main motives for cabin ownership, and that there is a positive connection between activities like bird and animal observation, hunting of big animals and skiing, and a sense of attachment to the place. Furthermore, their findings suggest that the recipients agreed with assertions that identification, attachment, and care of the place corresponded with their experience of life at cabins. Broadly argued, the studies of Kaltenborn (1998), Kaltenborn *et al.* (2005), Bjerke *et al.* (2006) and Støa *et al.* (2011) all draw the following conclusions: (1) the cabin is

perceived as a contrast to modern life; and (2) contact with nature is a main motivation for cabin ownership. These conclusions seem relatively fair so far. In fact, we would not really need these findings to conclude that Norwegian cabin owners perceive nature as a main motivation for going to the cabin, and that they go there with the intention to experience a break from everyday modern life. Indeed, this might only mirror what is associated with the mere concept of the cabin itself as discussed in the previous section. What is more, the conclusions of Støa *et al.*'s article – “the general pattern from both interviews and the survey is that the utility model has not changed much” – become highly problematic (Støa *et al.* 2011:57). Although this is a logical conclusion to draw, these findings must be understood critically simply as answers to a survey and some interviews. This is not to say that these findings do not represent a greater proportion of the cabin owner universe – in fact, the data collection might suggest that other cabin owners would have given similar answers. Yet, these findings merely confirm the general Norwegian idea of the cabin – an idea that should also be studied outside these perceptions. Moreover, these findings might simply reflect the reason why these buildings are considered cabins in the first place and not simply houses, rather than revealing people's mental and physical patterns when they are at the cabin. On the contrary, these perceptions might blind us from the ‘real’ socio-cultural importance of the cabin. To explore the latter we need interdisciplinary studies that not only ask owners to list their motivations and emotions, but also, as Berker and Gansmo suggest, examine the cabin as a part of a complex modern life – and not a national utopia (2011:170). Furthermore, although Støa *et al.* recognize embodied “scripts” in architecture and planning that can promote sustainable solutions (2011:63), they fail to recognize the material agency of today's cabins and their potential to bring habits and routines from our first home to the second. Instead they conclude that the most important aspect of the cabin is a shift from everyday urban life to different geographical areas, and “maybe not that much the physical properties of the cabin and its surroundings” (Støa *et al.* 2011:74). However, to assume that the cabin landscape is not affected by the cabin building itself is highly problematic. Therefore, this thesis draws attention to the role of mass media in shaping cabin representations and the change that has occurred between the 1960s and 2014. It also tracks the evolution of the relations between cabins, identity and nature.

1.3 Theoretical Background

This thesis is also based on the theoretical background provided by Tim Ingold's Dwelling Perspective, which offers a critique of the Cartesian duality of body and mind by offering an alternative understanding of life. Moreover, inspired by ecological psychology and phenomenology, this approach argues that mind and body cannot be seen as separate entities. The world can only unfold to us through bodily experience which is a prerequisite for human existence, and so there is no sense in attempting to understand the mind outside the context of bodily experience. Following this logic culture and nature cannot be understood as two different platforms as commonly assumed in Western thought. Moreover, the neo-Darwinian understanding of the human species as superior to other beings on account of their civilization and culture (contrary to a Hobbesian state of nature), becomes highly problematic. As problematized by Ingold, in separating culture and nature one must claim to be outside nature. Moreover, if you are a part of it then you do not live in nature, but rather in an environment. Ingold suggests a new paradigm for understanding the environment and life as such as a set of relations through lived experiences.

The implications of the Dwelling Perspective to this thesis are evident. Arriving from this perspective, the relations between mind and body, culture and nature, and life in all forms are intertwined and must be understood as a whole entity consisting of a multiplicity of relations. The cabin becomes an arena where life itself takes place through experiences (relations). Moreover, the cabin might be the one place where Norwegians spend the most time relating to the uncultivated parts of our environment than any other arena. It is therefore necessary to study the cabin as a trope where a significant part of our relations is played out, and how this place and the way we choose to live in it, has changed through time. As experiences cannot be distinguished from our mental understanding of the world, the study of how our life at the cabin has changed can give further insight of (1) how we understand the world and our part in it and (2) our capacity to change the way we think and act in our environment. As explained above, this demands an interdisciplinary approach. To assume that owning a cabin in a beautiful landscape and staying there for a couple of weeks a year will bring us closer to nature is not enough. In order to understand the relations between man and nature we have to study experiences as part of greater environments – especially at the cabin. The

cabin is important to study as it is upon these reflections that we make decisions, as these experiences – with relation to our environment – constitute life itself. This ontology sees cabin as interconnected with other social arenas including environmental politics. Moreover, the way we relate to materiality and other beings makes up our experiences and shapes future relations at not only local, but also national and global levels of relations.

This approach also criticizes a key distinction made at the foundation of this thesis: If culture and nature cannot be seen apart then what is the point of attempting to distinguish between nature and culture, as done in this thesis? I do still find this a difficult position. On the one hand, I do not want to strengthen a false worldview that might confuse our ontology. On the other hand, as relations are challenging to study, and we cannot give any definite answers on how the world is constructed; generalizations, groupings and distinctions (such as nature and culture) have the ability to highlight certain tendencies in our data. For me as a researcher, the distinction between nature and culture is strongly integrated at the root of modern society, and must therefore be studied. Yet, it is just as important to recognize the limitations of such a study. The Dwelling Perspective offers an interesting framework for studying different expressions of this dichotomy. This thesis applies the dwelling perspective to critically analyze data that are products of this ontology. There are some inherently problematic aspects of this definition as human beings and their production cannot be seen separate from nature. As stated by Peter Coates, “[n]ature is often presumed to be an objective reality with universal qualities unaffected by considerations of time, culture and place, an assumption especially evident in appeals to nature as a source of external authority” (Coates 1998:1). The term nature is, however, used to represent a contrast to the cabin infrastructure.

Within this framework, the cabin is also an agent. Moreover, based on phenomenology ontology, the Dwelling Perspective is closely linked to social practice theory and the concept of material agency. Material agency is here understood not as ‘scripts’ but, as Ingold defines embodiment in general, as “a movement of incorporation rather than inscription, not a transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated” (Ingold 2011:193). Following these guidelines, form is not privileged over process, as the process itself is embodied in the form. Moreover, technology inherits certain embodied sets of meaning that in turn influences our actions

as consumers. Understood in these terms, cabins, and the myriad of materials and technologies linked to them, are not unloaded entities shaped by rational choice. On the contrary, personal interests compete with a multiplicity of other forces that are already inscribed into things, our bodies (habits and memory), and our environment. This is not to argue that cabin owners are deprived of all agencies when technology is introduced, but if we want to challenge current patterns of practice, including consumption, new forms of information must be developed through active involvement in the planning processes.

Applying this theoretical framework, the cabin is an interesting object of study for two key reasons: (1) our experiences at the cabin are important as they affect our capacities for future practice and (2) at the same time, together with the habitus of cabin owners and nature, cabins and other material possessions are already inscribed with potentials that shape our actions at the cabin.

1.4 Methodological Background

This thesis provides a qualitative semiotic analysis of nature in Norwegian cabin representations in selected media. Semiotics is chosen in an attempt to shift the focus from the communication process to the sent message. These messages are treated as representative texts of signs, as what Lotman (1990) calls the “semiosphere” - a “book of signs” (Witoszek 2012:122-123).

Imagine a museum hall where exhibits from different periods are on display, along with inscriptions in known and unknown languages, and the instructions for decoding them; besides there are the explanations composed by the museum staff, plans for tours and rules for the behavior of the visitors. Imagine also in this hall tour-leaders and visitors and imagine all this as a single mechanism (which in a *certain sense it is*). This is an image of the semiosphere (Lotman 1990 as cited in Witoszek 2012:122)

These signs are studied in the Norwegian cultural context in an attempt to gain further insight of the Norwegian mindset towards nature. Here it is important not to confuse the concepts ‘sign’ and ‘text’. Semiotician Umberto Eco elaborates on the text in relation to sign systems as follows: “A text is not simply a communicational apparatus. It [a text] is a device which questions the previous signifying systems, often renews them, and

sometimes destroys them” (Eco 1984:25). One might question why media was chosen over interviews, as the latter tend to produce deep descriptions of phenomena. The motivation behind studying the sent message (the media) is its meaning to readers and society in general – its cultural role in shaping and responding to different contexts. Moreover, by buying and reading texts, the audience devotes finances, time and attention to the media’s message. As the audience invests efforts in the process of consuming these texts, there is strong reason to assume that the content to a degree carries a meaning to the reader. As the objective is to gain further insight in Norwegians’ nature experiences at the cabin, studying what is communicated in magazines about life at cabins is of great interest.

This thesis will compare and contrast textual findings from the cabin decade of the 1960s with today. For this purpose the data is sourced from two different time periods: (1) 1960 to 1969; and (2) 2013 to 2014. The time span of the data from the 1960s is significantly longer than the other; there are two reasons for this. First, a search gave great quantities of relevant texts from media today compared with a more limited data set from the 1960s. Moreover, in an age of media overload with a wide range of publications and a great interest for cabins it is relatively easy to gain access to a large amount of information. In the 1960s, cabins took a great share of media focus, but the amount of information was significantly smaller than today. In addition, a lesser share of Norwegians owned cabins in the 1960s than today, and fewer relevant articles were directed directly towards cabin owners in the media. Second, the shorter modern time frame of 2013 to 2014 limits the amount of data and hence the workload to obtain the research. This also served the purpose of focusing the data on more recent articles.

The following publications were chosen as the main source of data for this analysis: (1) *Bonytt* and (2) *A-magasinet* (1960s) (3) *Hyttemagasinet* from 2013 and 2014. *A-magasinet* was Norway’s first newspaper weekend magazine first published in 1927-1944 by *Aftenposten* (Norwegian newspaper), since then it has been periodically re-launched and is currently in publication at the time of writing. Cabin representations that describe the cabin structure are mainly based on a special cabin and summerhouse issue published by *Bonytt* in 1963. The reason for this is that it features descriptions of ‘real’ cabins and cabin owners, the texts are directly targeted towards current or potential cabin owners and, as an interior design magazine, *Bonytt* attempts to keep readers updated on the latest trends. For activities and experiences I have mainly used

A-magasinet as it features descriptions of what people do at their cabins. These texts are compared and contrasted with *Hyttemagasinet* from 2013 and 2014. As will be further elaborated, *Hyttemagasinet* is a cabin magazine targeted at current at future cabin owners, published by *Aftenposten*.

The data of this thesis function as a middle ground between literary representations and real life examples. The articles are edited and written mainly by the magazine writers, yet they feature ‘real’ cabin owners and their cabins. The Norwegian cabin landscape is, however, complex and the represented cabins are not necessarily representative for the cabin universe. Yet, having a great readership suggests that these magazines may reveal some general tendencies in Norwegian society.

More specifically, the study of this thesis is first and foremost a semantic analysis of cabin representations that focus on themes and concepts by identifying tendencies and contradictions in the selected texts. In other words, the research focuses on which topics are accentuated and which topics are absent or remain in the background.

Paradigmatic analysis involves comparing and contrasting each of the signifiers present in the text with absent signifiers which in similar circumstances might have been chosen, and considering the significance of the choices made. (Chandler 2007:88)

The main focus is on topics that could reveal something about the role of nature in these texts. Examples of such topics include architecture, interiors, outdoor activities, consumption and nature depictions. What soon became evident in the first stages of analysis was that certain narratives reoccurred in many of the articles from the same time frame. Additionally, although sharing many of the same characteristics, the featured cabins also accounted for the heterogeneous character of Norwegian cabins. It therefore became interesting to adopt a semiotic technique of focused mainly on oppositions. The main distinction to have in mind is the following, as explained by semiotician Daniel Chandler:

Oppositions (logical ‘contradictories’: mutually exclusive terms (e.g. alive-dead, where ‘not alive’ can only be ‘dead’); *antonyms* (logical ‘contraries’): terms which are comparatively graded on the same implicit dimension (e.g. good-bad, where ‘not good’ is not necessarily ‘bad’)) (Chandler 2007:91)

The analysis of this thesis aims to determine which ‘side’ of oppositions are recurring in the studied texts and whether or not the findings from the two periods (1960s and 2013-2014) show any meaningful patterns. In practice this implies identifying the ‘ideal’ cabin in the 1960s and 2013-2014 as warm or cold, big or small, frugal or luxurious, simple or comfortable, indoors or outdoors oriented, traditional or modern, et cetera. These oppositions and the patterns of the findings are read as signs – what the words, images, stories and rhetoric stand for in a wider social, economic and political context. Furthermore, the conclusions of this analysis are used to extract information about the roles of nature in these cabin representations, and how these roles might have changed since the 1960s.

1.4.1 Limitations/Constraints and Challenges

As with any research project, there are some limitations to the study of this thesis that should be illuminated. First of all, the selection of data is not representative for the cabin universe. *Aftenposten* is one of the biggest papers in Norway both in sales, online readership and subscription. Founded in 1860 as *Christiania Adresseblad* (Christiania was the old name of Oslo), but changed name to *Aftenposten* in 1861. As the first name of the paper suggests, the paper is mainly read by people in the Oslo area. As the main paper of the Norwegian capital, the readership of *Aftenposten* consist of drivers of culture that influence trends, which creates an interesting readership but is not representative of the general universe of texts directed towards Norwegian cabin owners. The same counts for the readership of *BoNytt* and *Hyttemagasinet*, which only represents a fraction of society (people who are interested in the topic and can afford glossy magazines). It is also relevant to question whether the readers of these texts are mainly affluent middle to upper-middle class readers. However, there are certain advantages to these sources: Limiting the data to this readership may reflect highly influential groups of Norwegians that shape cabin culture and at the same time tend to live close to Oslo. The latter fact brings us to the third reason why the Oslo area’s readership is interesting in a cabin context: Oslo is also the political capital of Norway, meaning that the experiences at the cabin expressed by this demographic might have closer contact with national political process. In short, the data has a strong validity, but has a weak reliability as the findings cannot be generalized to the whole universe of cabin representations in media or cabins and cabin owners in general. Yet, the semiotic

study can identify some aspects of how values have changed over time within this specific text subgenre.

An additional challenge is that the texts are in Norwegian. Although Norwegian is my native language, the content demands good translations that preserve the meaning of the Norwegian sources. As I deal with the frequency of words etc., I will attempt to translate words and meanings as to best conform to the Norwegian text, and provide supplement explanations when needed. This process complicates the research and writing-process while increasing the risk of miscommunication. On the other hand, non-Norwegian speaking readers will be able to appreciate my findings, and I hope my research can contribute to broader international research on second homes and nature experiences.

1.5 Roadmap

Including this introduction (chapter 1), my thesis consists of five chapters. The second chapter offers a brief historical background of cabins and nature in Norwegian culture. The third chapter is the first of two analysis chapters, providing a semiotic analysis focused on representations of cabin buildings in selected media from the 1960s and today (2013-2014). Chapter four actively applies the Dwelling Perspective in an analysis of cabin representations of experiences. Both chapters attempt to identify the underlying meanings for understanding nature in these representations. It will be argued that the findings of this thesis suggest that it might be necessary to conceptualize the cabin as part of modernity. Moreover, I suggest that the cabin should not be read in terms of an escape from everyday life. Rather, the cabin should be understood as a place that offers *ways of living* in the landscape that are not experienced at ‘home’ in the city. This relation- (or experience-) oriented approach, I argue, could empower Norwegians in the 21st century.

2 A Brief History of Cabins and Nature in Norwegian National Culture

2.1 Introduction

“The Cabin” is the title of a hit-song by the well-known Norwegian comedian duo, the Ylvis brothers. The music video brings us to an office where we meet a woman that receives an email with a video attached, and the narrator singing: “Oh baby, let me take you to a place, where it is just you and me, to my cabin” (Ylvis 2014). The narrator, who seems to be the woman’s husband, is seen driving a big Jeep out into the Norwegian wilderness. Here he stops and walks for a while until he finally sees his cabin. Next, we are introduced to his dear family cabin, with a simple interior and a relatively low material standard – according to the vocalist it takes several hours to heat the place up – in other words, his “small wooden paradise” (Ylvis 2014). Here, the narrator’s life is to be lived to its fullest: “Sixty square meters of heaven on earth, a tiny wooden paradise, it’s my own little private pinewood Taj Mahal, except from the shape and the size, the cabin! Where I come to relax. The cabin! Wear the same pants for a week” (Ylvis 2014). But there is an alternative to this representation of the Norwegian cabin culture, anno 2014, a new standard led by the financial elite: Luxury cabins, in the most extreme taking the form of ‘fairy-tale castles’. Yet with irony, the cabin representation featured in the Ylvis Brothers’ hit refers to the post-war cabin tradition of joy in nature, experienced through simple means, rooted in Norwegian identity, and still very much alive today. Yet, this image is challenged by a new type of cabin – the cabin as a place of indoor comfort with luxurious amenities – a place to enjoy your champagne and Jacuzzi after a day on the alpine slopes.

This chapter explores the memic aspects of Norwegian cabin culture since 1814, the year Norway got its constitution. The chapter provides a cultural background for the comparative semiotic text analysis that will follow in the next chapters. The chapter’s objective is to accommodate further research in two ways: The chapter will (1) further address the relations between the cabin and Norwegian identity and (2) identify and discuss elements that have influenced Norwegian cabin culture and *friluftsliv* for the last

200 years. In short, this chapter attempts to emphasize the deep roots of the cabin in the national culture of Norway, including key elements associated with this phenomenon. Inspired by Rees' (2014) groupings of different phases in Norwegian cabin history, this chapter studies four key periods in Norwegian cabin history: (1) The late 18th to early 19th century (the *seter* and poor man's cabin). With a *seter* it is here meant a "(mountain) grazing land with a house where one had/has the livestock in the summers" (De Caprona 2013:1128, my translation⁸); (2) the late 19th to early 20th century (Fritjof Nansen and the hunter's cabin); (3) the mid-20th century (Naess and the cabin as a thinking place); and (4) the late 20th and early 21st century (the modern family cabin). It will be argued that despite the changing character of the term 'cabin' there is an overwhelming consistency and continuity of Norwegian cabin culture.

2.2 Building a Nation: The *Seter* and Poor Man's Cabin

As early as the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries, there were predecessors of what is currently conceived as the cabin. In the years following 1814 the cabin's romantic national qualities were fully utilized (Hodne 2002). As identified by Rees, this stage of history involves two main types of housing: The *seter*, and the poor man's cabin. Furthermore, the 1800s were a time of nation building in Norway and, in the years following the 1814 constitution, the cultural elite mobilized to create a unique identity for the Norwegian people. Literature played an essential role in this process, and the creation of a linguistic and a literary tradition was considered a vital means of demonstrating Norwegian sovereignty. But there was a conceptual problem: "In a country without established cultural institutions, where is the 'real' Norwegian culture?" (Rees 2011:23). As mentioned in the introduction, the answer was found in the majestic Norwegian nature and the 'Volksgeist' of the Norwegian people, in particular the farmers. To better explain this, Klausen's model for rural and state culture in Norway provides a helpful starting point (Table 1).

⁸ Original text: «(fjell) beite med hus der en har (hadde) husdyra om sommeren» (De Caprona 2013:1128).

Table 1 Klausen's Table: Rural vs State (Klausen 1984:65, my own translation)

RURAL	STATE
LOCAL	CENTRAL
MULTIPLEX (personal) RELATIONS	UNIVERSAL (matter-of-factly) RELATIONS
EGALITARIAN	HIERARCHICAL
"AGGREGATE"	"GOVERNANCE"

It all starts with two socially constructed categories: The rural (*bygd og land*) vs the state (*stat og by*) (Sinding-Larsen 1984). Nature and rural culture construct the fundament of a shared national culture in Norway. Sinding-Larsen argues that this has been a "conscious cultural political strategy" on the side of the Norwegian middle-class or bourgeoisie (Sinding-Larsen 1984:128). There are two main reasons for this: (1) a quest for national sovereignty and (2) "the need to redefine peasant society (and nature) to something bygone and romantic that could be subject to dreams of the new urbanized everyday life" (Sinding-Larsen 1984:128).

As places at the edge of nature and civilization, the *seter* and poor man's cabin were in the 1800s considered inspiring places for a nation-building process by the cultural elite (Rees 2014). As argued in the next paragraphs, what we now consider a cabin has changed rapidly since 1814. Indeed, the *seter* and poor man's cabin had significantly different functions and connotations from today's leisure cabins. Yet, elements of these early cultural trends can still be observed in modern Norwegian cabin culture, as elaborated later in this chapter (Hidle and Ellingsen 2011).

In eighteenth- and nineteenth-century literature, the *seter* is actively used as a setting for stories of encounters between people from different social classes in the transitional place between civilization and nature. In Norway, the *seter* has pre-historic roots as an important part of farming systems, providing resources for keeping livestock. In early

Norwegian culture, livestock was considered both an economic and social investment. Like the Range Rover today, in prehistoric Norway cattle were a symbol of wealth (Borchgrevink 1977). The *seter* can be understood in terms of its location in outlying nature (*utmark*). Borchgrevink offers the following definitions of outlying nature (*utmark*) and *seter*:

Utmarka or *utrastene* which were connected to a farm (“as portions and privileges” comprised 1) the nearer grazing areas just outside the infield fence, where the woodland started (called *heimrasta*) plus 2) - and perhaps most important – the more remote territories, usually in the hills and the mountains. In these extensive areas we find the *seters*, which have been called an ‘operational annex’ to the farm. This is indeed a highly characteristic designation, and a fact which has prompted me to use the term *seter*-area for the title of this paper. (Borchgrevink 1977:5-6)

Borchgrevink applies the helpful definition of a *seter* system as offered by Reinton:

We have a *seter* system when a farm, (a permanent winter dwelling), keeps the livestock in summer grazing in a place some distance from the farm, where there is a shelter or dwelling and regular personnel, in order to exploit a greater area for grazing, and usually also for gathering hay and other kinds of fodder, so as to save the infield area and find better grazing, to be able to feed more cattle and keep them through the winter, and to secure supplies and provisions for the permanent residence – the farm (Reinton as quoted in Borchgrevink 1977:6).

The *seter* was in use during the grazing season, the duration of which varied with location, species and climate. As an example, the grazing season was approximately four months for cows, with adjustments for climatic factors. Naturally, the grazing season was longer in the south and by the coast (Borchgrevink 1977).

In Norwegian literature, life at the *seter* often carries idyllic connotations of national romanticism. Moreover, in the late eighteenth- and early nineteenth century the *seter* was conceptualized as a place of transition in two ways 1) different social classes and 2) human and nature – a trope that soon became a core element of Norwegian national thought in the years following the 1814 constitution. Occupied by a dairymaid (*budeie*) and geographically separate from the rest of the farm structure, the *seter* might be considered a symbol of freedom as the location offered a private sphere for the *budeie* and other visitors. Moreover, the *seter* would be visited occasionally by nature enthusiasts from the city, inspired by the natural beauty of the landscape and the humble

life it accommodated. This phenomenon is frequent in literature set at the *seters* from this period, and examples can be found in the works of Norwegian writers including Vinje, Bjerregaard, Asbjørnsen, and Collett. In these works, the *seter* represents a meeting place between different classes of society (Rees 2014). Thus, the *seter* is an early symbol of Norwegian social democracy.

The poor man's cabin is quite distinct from the idyll associated with the *seter* and current ideas of the cabin as a place of leisure. Unlike today's cabins, the cabin of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries carried negative connotations as the home of the poor. Yet, as Rees observes, the poor man's cabin was, like the *seter*, explored by post 1814 writers as "a potential national trope, and as a place where pressing identity questions relating to class and modernity could be worked out conceptually" (Rees 2014:49). Although the cabin had not yet become the national symbol of leisure that it is today, some early writers discovered its rich cultural capabilities. These included Wergeland, Asbjørnsen, and Hansen. Wergeland was early in giving cabins recreational value and positive associations. At one point he perceives poverty as 'cozy': "No one has the right to be sorrowful or dissatisfied by his lot in life; and we have seen just how cozy it can be in a cottage; indeed, we have even found a beauty in it that we could better feel than describe" (Wergeland as quoted and translated in Rees 2014:57). Wergeland is one example of a Norwegian writer who went as far as to glorify the spartan life at the poor man's cabin as an ideal of moderation. In these writings, the rural peasant farmer is glorified for his values, a potential model for Norwegian character based on moderation and common sense. In this sense, poverty is in some texts portrayed as a heroic condition. Rees identifies the literature at this time already is starting to imagine cabins as an "in-between status," which "might signify identity and mediate between nature and culture" (Rees 2014:80).

By studying 18th and early 19th century narratives from the *seter* and *hytte*, we can observe that these places are already starting to take shape as tropes in Norwegian culture. They also demonstrate what is in Norway often referred to as national romanticism, although Witoszek argues that this Norwegian mentality is a carrier of Christian Enlightenment values rather than romantic concepts of revolution and passion (Witoszek 1998:31). According to Witoszek, this Christian ethos praises frugality and respect for nature, while promoting symbiosis and egalitarian ideals (see Witoszek 1998:155). As will be further elaborated, such characteristics are still part of the concept

of the ‘good’ Norwegian. In other words, Norwegian identity had already started to take shape with the *seter* and the poor man’s cabin at this point in history. The next section addresses a phase of cabin culture where the national identity gains more cohesion: at the hunter’s cabin in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, a period known in Norway as *nasjonalromantikken* (the national romanticism).

2.3 The ‘Good Norwegian’: Fritjof Nansen, *Friluftsliv* and the Hunter’s Cabin

Despite the fact that the cabin in the late 19th and early 20th centuries functioned as a family leisure retreat, with *Turistforeningen* (the Tourist Association) at the forefront of this transition, literature often represented the cabin with a counter-narrative of solitude and survival. At this time primitive hunter’s cabins filled the pages of cabin literature (Rees 2014). To better understand how these cultural developments affected national identity, this section explores the cultural heritage of the Norwegian pole explorer and humanist Fritjof Nansen. Nansen had a private family cabin at Sørkje in Numedal (Rees 2014:85-86), but was first and foremost known as polar explorer and savior of the nation. Nansen represents the masculine and lonesome nature-protagonist, and was a leading author of polar literature and nature writing in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.

Nansen found freedom and reflection in nature, where he formulated a critique of Norwegian society. Moreover, nature represents liberation in Nansen’s work: “Truly there is a virtue in a day such as this in the mountains; fresh impressions flowing upon the mind, sweep away the stagnant thoughts, and set one free” (Nansen 1925:105-106). But Nansen argues that to experience this liberation one should also free oneself from material society and develop a primitive lifestyle. As the comment below shows, Norwegians were not good at following this mentality, and this became the core of Nansen’s critique of Norwegian society and culture:

Just from the time of Sverre – and long before – and to a few years ago, it was the same up here – the same loneliness over these mountain plains in the winter... But now! Locomotives through the silence, the trains are passing back and forth, the black coal smog blows out from the tunnel into the blue sky – and the so-called culture is reaching higher and higher up on the plains with its hotels and its ‘tourists’ (...) But oh! If they only did not

bring so many other things with them, material things that do not benefit the human mind. All kinds of luxury, with food, and drink, and toilet articles, and card games, and practical jokes. Now people come up here to the plains, to one of these large hotels, to kill time, and live a noisy life for days and weeks, so they need to go back to the city to rest... That plain that lifts the human mind, and would have offered the greater, simpler lines, few people can see (Nansen as cited in Samuelsen 2010:50, my own translation).⁹

As suggested by the above citation, Nansen found the lifestyle and developments of Norwegian society alarming. He also considered the demystification of nature alarming, and argued that our relations to ourselves and others were threatened by the lack of spirituality in Norwegian society. To create the best version of ourselves and society, he argued, we must search for peace and quiet and simplicity. Moreover, as explained by Social Anthropologist Marianne Gullestad, peace (*fred*), calm/quiet (*ro*) and quiet (*stillhet*) still hold rich meanings in Norwegian culture (1992). Moreover, these terms can refer to the absence of: conflict (within family, between colleagues, neighbors or friends), social contact (yet, immediate family and friends are often exceptions) and noise (Gullestad 1992:141,153). Avoiding such elements is a means of guarding the immediate family and oneself from external disturbance. The home and nature are two particularly important places associated with peace, calm and quiet, and are thus often connected to the private and personal. This idea is furthermore closely related to the Norwegian understanding of 'home' as synonymous with 'private,' yet simultaneously this is an arena where identity and social life is negotiated (Gullestad 1992). One could guess that the cold climate of Norway combined with a 'peasant in the city' (*bønder i byen*) mentality – where the city is associated with the unfriendly, and the home is a safe realm for personal relations – encourage this 'introvert' mentality. The word 'introvert' is used here as social distance is, ironically, associated with good social relations:

⁹ Original text: «Like fra Sverres tid — og lenge før — og til for få år siden, var det det samme her oppe — den samme ensomheten over disse fjell-viddene om vinteren... Men nu! Lokomotiv-pipene skingret gjennom stilheten, togene for prustende att og fra, den svarte kull-røiken slo ut av tunnel-hullene op mot den blå himmel — og den såkalte kulturen kryper høiere og høiere op på viddene med sine hoteller og sine uungåelige 'turister.' (...) Men å! når det bare ikke fulgte så meget a`ent med, det som ikke hever menneskene. Alskens luksus, med mat, og drikke, og toiletter, og kortspill, og narrestreker. Nu kommer folk herop på viddene, til et av disse store hotellene, for å slå tiden ihjel, og lever et larmende liv i dager og uker, så de må til byen for å hvile.... Den viddene som løfter menneskesinnet, og skulde gi det de større, enklere linjer, ser de ferreste» (Nansen as cited in Samuelsen 2010:50).

Distance is emphasized somewhat more than closeness, in that one needs distance in order to experience closeness. This is especially pronounced in the case of peace in its meaning of peace from other people. (2) A view of human beings which implies that control of self is especially important. This is especially connected to peace in its meaning of ‘quiet’ (*ro*). (3) Certain guidelines for action. This refers to being whole, balanced, and safe by not involving oneself too much and by avoiding open personal conflicts. People that do not understand a little hint ought to be avoided. (Gullestad 1992:147)

Gullestad situates these categories within a greater framework of meaning: “Social interaction is easily interpreted as a reduction of autonomy and a fragmentation of the self” (1992:159). By 1916 Nansen had become a highly influential character in Norway (Samuelsen 2010:39), and his ideas were given much attention in Norway despite his strong critique:

The typical ‘tourist’ is one that takes advantage of the ‘well-utilized tourist cabins’ and other initiatives to ease the crossing of outlying fields. Through this the tourist is trapped in her own tourist reality, and expands the morally dubious sphere of civilization into nature (Nansen as cited in Samuelsen 2010:51, my own translation).¹⁰

As suggested above, Nansen was not fond of the materialistic developments of Norwegian society. In this account, living with simple means represents liberation from a ‘trapped’ mind-set associated with life in the city (civilization). Not only does civilization offer a limited conceptual toolbox, it also brings a morality that does not belong in ‘untouched’ nature.

Nansen’s own representation of the heroic Norwegian became a role model for Norwegians for generations to come. Moreover, in addition to being one of the two greatest polar explorers in Norwegian history (Amundsen was the second one), Nansen was also a political savior of the nation in the critical year of 1905 when his charisma and diplomatic efforts actively contributed to the dissolution of the union with Sweden. King Henrik the 4th exclaimed: “Take the command, Fritjof Nansen! Right now you are the Norwegian flag” (Worm-Muller 1955:xx1, my translation).¹¹ Through his

¹⁰ Original text: «Den typiske ‘turisten’ er den som benytter seg av de ‘velutstyrte turisthyttene’ og andre tiltak for å lette ferdelsen. Turisten blir gjennom dette fanget inn i en egen turistvirkelighet, og utvider derigjennom den moralske tvilsomme sivilisasjonssfæren inn i naturen» (Nansen as cited in Samuelsen 2010:51).

¹¹ Original text: “Ta styret, Fritjof Nansen! I dette øyeblikk er De Norges flagg” (Worm-Muller 1955:xx1).

involvement as a political strategist, Nansen demonstrated great courage and wisdom, and requested the same heroic qualities of his countrymen. Such assets included care, solidarity, courage and, most importantly, will: “There comes a time in the life of a nation, as in a man’s life, when one has to risk everything, and give everything” (Wiggen 2006:23, my translation)¹²; “What we now first and foremost need is neither ‘spirit’ or ‘heart’, ‘goodness’ or ‘faith’; we need a common will; and we want to see it in the leaders of society” (Wiggen 2006:73).¹³ In short, Nansen challenged the Norwegian people to not only explore nature in simple and extreme conditions, he also encouraged them to stand up for their nation and demonstrate the “courage of a hero” (*heltemod*) (Wiggen 2006:139). Nansen’s heroic character was further strengthened in his role as an international diplomat and humanist until his death in 1930.

The statistics of cabin life, however, do not correspond with the prominent narratives of the lonely man in nature. Moreover, the cabin had become place for family. As problematized by Rees, “the cabin novels around the turn of the century instead present a counter narrative that focuses on the individual male’s attempt to maintain a stable masculine identity” (Rees 2014:85-86). The mythical image of Norwegians in cabins – as the lonesome man living primitively in solitude in ‘untouched’ nature – was further developed by Naess in the subsequent era of cabin ownership.

2.4 Arne Naess and the Cabin as a “Thinking Place”

In the mid-20th century, the welfare state made leisure cabins accessible to most people. The Second World War left parts of the country in ruins and there were strict regulations on consumption. From efforts to rebuild the country followed a frugal ideal, and living the good life with simple means was achieved at the cabin and in *friluftsliv*. At the same time an increase in urbanization encouraged ideals of going ‘back to origins’ with the cabin as a place for harmonizing with nature and the rural – a “thinking

¹² Original text: “Det kommer stundom stunder i en Nations Liv som i en mands, da en maa vaage alt, hellere end at la sig by alt” (Wiggen 2006:23).

¹³ Original text: “Hvad vi nu først og fremst trænger er hverken ‘Aand’ eller ‘Hjerte’, ‘Godhed’ eller ‘fast Tro’; vi trænger en fast vilje; og vi vil se den i øverste ledende Stilling” (28.02.1905 In Wiggen:73).

place”¹⁴. At the same time the welfare-state and working-class culture was on rise in Norway (Sejersted 2011), and people had increasing purchasing power after the war, so building a cabin became feasible for many Norwegians. Thus, Rees calls the time between 1930s and 1970s “the golden age of cabin therapy” (2014:117). *Turistforeningen* (the Tourist Association) functioned as the main agent of this transition.

If hydropower can be called the spine in the Norwegian industrialization process, then the Tourist Association’s network of foot paths and cabins represents the core of Norwegian’s view of themselves as a nation of nature enthusiasts. (Jørgensen 2011:39, my own translation).¹⁵

In the 1960s the cabin had the reputation of a thinking place. Narratives of the lonely man living in nature dominate cabin literature also in this decade, and it was mainly characterized by humbleness and self-reflection.

Arne Næss, ‘Tvergastein’ and ‘Ecosophy-T’



Figure 2 Photograph: From Kit-Fai Naess’ private collection

¹⁴ Personal communication with Nina Witoszek 10.11.2014.

¹⁵ Original text: «Det å gå på tur, til fots eller på ski, som en aktivitet hvor kroppen ble eksponert for ”natur” gjennom større eller mindre fysiske anstrengelser, står spesielt sentralt i denne opplevelsen. Turistforeningens kollektive hyttenettverk var en nasjonal stolthet, på mange måter en sosialdemokratisk infrastruktur for naturopplevelser. Dersom vannkraften kan kalles ryggraden i den norske industrialiseringen, representerer turistforeningens nettverk av stier og hytter selve kjernen i nordmennenes oppfatning av seg selv som en nasjon av naturelskere» (Jørgensen 2011:39)

Leading this movement was deep ecology philosopher Arne Naess, who wrote his works from his cabin, Tvergastein, situated at Hallingsskarvet in Southern Norway. Built in 1937, Tvergastein is the realization of a dream Naess already had at the age of 10 or 11 when he first visited this mountain area (Rothenberg 1992:86). Naess comments that he felt like he belonged in the mountains: “The most decent way to live was to stay up here in the mountains, not to return” (Rothenberg 1992:86-87, my own translation).¹⁶ To Rothenberg’s question of why the mountain is more decent, Naess answers: “Because from here you have the right perspective. The mountain symbolises the wide and deep perspectives” (Rothenberg 1992:87, my own translation¹⁷). From Tvergastein Naess enthusiastically observes various forms of life outside his cabin and argues that these observations increase his quality of life. At Tvergastein Naess formulates much of his philosophical work of deep ecology. At its most essential, deep ecology is about recognizing one’s place in the universe as a part of the greater ecological system, a greater Self, as Naess argues. As part of a greater Self than the individual (the ecosystem), Naess is keen to observe that he grows as a human in encounter and respect for the other species in this local cabin area. He experiences Self-realization (with capital ‘S’), as harmony with nature increases the self-realization of all living beings (2008a:93). Thus, to Naess, these species have intrinsic value, and to see them flourish gives him an unlimited source of joy. In other words, Naess’ eco-philosophy almost erases the borderline between civilization and nature: Humans are seen as one of many species interdependent in the same ecosystem and by forgetting the implications of unlimited consumption and the pace of life in the cities, we damage the greater Self of which we are a part. Thus Naess attempted to find the suitable and most respectful ways of life at Tvergastein:

The choice of geographical place was based more or less on a set of requirements, but now the question was, What would the place require of me? What kind of lifestyle, activities, and ceremonies would be appropriate for this place? What would be a life worthy of Hallingskarvet and in solidarity with, and respect for, the other life-forms? (Naess 2008a:54).

¹⁶ Original text: «Den eneste anstendige måten å leve på, var å forbli oppe på fjellet, ikke gå ned» (Rothenberg 1992:86-87).

¹⁷ Original text: «Fordi herfra har du det rette perspektivet. Fjellet er et symbol på det vide og dype perspektiv» (Rothenberg 1992:87).

As the above quote suggests, Naess was not only concerned with big thoughts and philosophical work at his cabin. At Tvergastein he wished to live by his principles of deep ecology (see Naess 2008a:107). According to Naess, this resulted in some brave and unsuccessful attempts at self-reliance:

The difficulty and cost of transporting things by horse, together with the obvious peculiarities of the place, clearly suggested a simple lifestyle with minimum self-reliance. Clumsy attempts on my part to produce some vegetables were complete failures. Of the plants, only the mouse-ear was both edible and sufficient in quantity to serve the human occupier of the cottage. Hunting was possible further down, but distasteful. In short, I had to rely on 'importing' things, mostly by rucksack. The question of heating the cottage was central. But the few junipers at 1,400 to 1,500 meters were small and rarely more than two to five inches high. Obviously they should be protected, living precariously at the upper limits of their reach. Again, the obvious solution was to import. So there were two major unpleasant conclusions. There was no question of living on the land by the land. (Naess 2008a:54-55)

The above description provided by Naess of life at his cabin is only one of many reflections on sustainable living at Tvergastein. In these accounts, Naess creates seductive, creative and lively narratives of living a rich life with simple means. Compelling narratives about the simple but rich life in nature and Naess's work continue to inspire new generations of Norwegians. Indeed, as noted by Witoszek, Naess's ecosophy should be seen as continuation of a longer nature tradition in Norway. Central to this idea is a humbleness before nature: "The central exhortation found in Håvamål [collection of Old Norse Poems]: 'You shall not believe (nor know) that you are someone special,' is in Naess extended to 'we humans shall not believe we are special in the universe'" (Witoszek 1998:155, my own translation).¹⁸ Moreover, with Naess and the cabin boom in the mid-20th century, *janteloven* (the Norwegian cultural norm that one should not in any case brag or assume superiority) is extended to nature. Moreover, nature is represented in Norwegians' images of identity as having some kind of intrinsic value, as of being a part of the Norwegian society (Reed and Rothenberg 1993:6). According to Naessian deep ecology, self-realization is connected with a realization of our dependency as humans on – and position in – the rest of the

¹⁸ Original text: «Den sentrale formaningen som ligger i Håvamål: 'Du skal ikke tro (eller vise) at du er noen spesiell,' forstørres hos Naess til 'vi mennesker skal ikke tro vi er spesielle i universet'» (Witoszek 1998:155).

ecosystem. At this time the cabin is a family place, yet the family as a unit does not enter cabin literature until late 20th century (Rees 2014). Instead, narratives situated at cabins from this period present solitude as a means of access to nature. As we shall see in the next section, the cabin tradition has undergone a transformation in recent decades.

2.5 Cabins in ‘Modern’ Norway

The last two and a half decades have seen significant changes in the energy consumption of Norwegian cabins. Energy consumption levels are increasing rapidly (Aall 2011, Johnsen 2011) and cabins are growing in size, standard and number (Haugen 2008, Vittersø 2007, Hidle 2011). The ultra-wealthy, such as business-man Kjell Inge Røkke, are at the forefront of this trend often referred to as the cabin-palace (*hyttepalass*) (Rees 2014:151). The left wing politician Erik Solheim is well-known for his statement regarding this development: “Røkke and other fat cats in the process of killing one of the things about Norway... In Norway we have a long tradition of a more modest approach to wealth” (Solheim as translated by Rees 2014:151). The growing rate of new cabin owners suggests that in an increasingly ‘urbanised’ everyday life we find what Norwegians refer to as the ‘time squeeze’ (*tidsklemma*), the desire to escape ‘expectations’ and disturbing elements of city life. Weekend trips to the cabin have become more common along with technological advances – for example allowing you to turn on your cabin heating from your iPhone (an app connects your phone to the cabin’s heating system) – making the transition from ‘home’ in the city to the cabin easier.

Indeed, cabins are currently a commodity in high demand. Between 1998 and 2008 approximately 50 000 new cabins were built, and in 2015 there is about 419 246 private cabins spread across the Norwegian landscape (Hidle and Ellingsen 2011:91, Statistics Norway 2015). Rees locates the beginning of a trend to build bigger cabins in the mid-1990s. Moreover, the 1983 average of sixty-two square meters for newly built cabin increased to seventy-nine square meters in 2003, and ninety-four square meters in 2007 (Rees 2014:152). It should be noted that camping serves similar purposes, yet is often excluded from texts related to the cabin and nature.

These motives for ‘home-building’ exceed an immediate necessity perspective, and together with a generic increase in purchasing power point

to a development in which Norwegian homes and cabins have become a large share of aesthetic consumption since the early 1990s. The cabin is not only part of the home with a special relation to nature and free time – the design of the cabin has also become an aesthetic question. (Berker *et al.* 2011:11, my own translation¹⁹)

Berker *et al.* identify two distinctive features of Norwegian households during the last decades (Berker *et al.* 2011:11). The first is increased purchasing power. Moreover, a left-oriented state-structure has contributed to relatively equally distributed income from an economy with growing oil and gas revenues. For example, the average size of a home has increased from 101m² in 1981 to 119 m² in 2006 (Berker *et al.* 2011:11). The second feature is a transformation of the ‘home’ into an arena of identity-formation and social relations. These transformations can also be observed in the cabin culture: Technology and social relations are brought to the cabin and people go to the cabin to escape alienation from nature and the ‘expectations’ of increased urbanization. Together these two developments represent a shift from the mere national to the cosmopolitan: The global market has increasingly invaded even the most private spheres of Norwegianness – the ‘home’ and the cabin.

2.6 Conclusions

Norwegian culture is founded on a rich nature tradition. From the *seter* and the poor man’s cabin in the 1700s, one can already observe the early stages of what developed into a rich culture surrounding cabins in Norway. In these representations one can find a glorification of pietistic values, and these ideas were codified by the great Norwegian thinkers Nansen and Naess. In these narratives the cabin functions as a thinking place for the lonely man in nature, despite the fact that the cabin developed increasingly into a family place for the Norwegian people during the early and mid-20th century. However, this mythos of the lonely man in nature with simple means is now being challenged by the new story of luxurious cabins with the latest in ‘global’ technology. The witty image of the cabin painted by the Ylvis brothers in their song about the simplistic 60s cabin

¹⁹ Original text: «Disse motivene for ‘hjem-bygging’ overskrider et umiddelbart nytteperspektiv, og sammen med den generelle økningen i kjøpekraft tyder mye på at norske hjem og hytter har blitt åsted for en spesielt høy andel av estetisk forbruk siden det tidlige 1990-tallet. Hytta er altså ikke bare en del av hjemmet med en spesiell relasjon til natur og fritid. Hvordan hytta utformes har også blitt et estetisk spørsmål» (Berker *et al.* 2011:11).

might indicate that the cabin is increasingly observed ironically – as if through the lens of foreigners – by Norwegian people with increasingly global perspective.

As we can see, the concept of an ‘ideal’ cabin has changed since the post-war period. We must ask what happens when Nansen and Naess’s ‘thinking places’ are invaded by modern technology. In the next chapters I offer my own semiotic analysis of representations of cabins and nature experiences in selected Norwegian media from the 1960s and today.

3 Cabin Representations

3.1 Introduction

The aim of this first analysis chapter is to provide an answer to the research question: *What is the role of nature in Norwegian mass media cabin representations in the 1960s and today (2013-2014)?* Moreover, the purpose of this part of the thesis is to map out layers of meaning of understanding nature, the findings of which are divided into two parts. This chapter discusses strains in cabin representations related to the cabin building (present chapter) while Chapter 4 elaborates on tasks, activities and skills (experiences) in the same representations. I have chosen selected media dating from 1963 to compare their representations with examples from 2013/2014. The material is critically examined by a method inspired by Lotmanian-semiotics, focusing on distinctions and oppositions and decoding underlying worldviews (Lotman 1990). In practical terms, the provided analysis puts emphasis on patterns in the texts (words, sentences, images etc.), and attempts to offer a contextual reading of these elements as symbols of deeper layers of meaning.

In this chapter, specific examples of typical cabin representations in the media from both the 1960's and 2010's are almost exclusively based upon cabin representations in magazines that focus on the building and interior: (1) *Bonytt* cabin issue (1963) and (2) *Hyttemagasinet* (no. 5 and no. 9 from 2013 and no.2 from 2014). *Bonytt* was chosen due to its popularity during the time period. I analyzed specifically the cabin and summerhouse issue from 1963. This issue is the main source of data from the 1960s in this chapter. In 2014, however, there are at least two Norwegian magazines specifically targeted to cabin owners, *Hytteliv* and *Hyttemagasinet*. I have chosen *Hyttemagasinet* for two reasons: (1) It is published by a subdivision of the Norwegian newspaper, *Aftenposten*, and thus connected to findings from the 1960s in *Amagasinet* (*Aftenposten*); and (2) Unlike *Hytteliv*, which is a more established magazine that features a select few articles mainly addressing interior design, *Hyttemagasinet* has recently started as a magazine that aims to cover multiple aspects of cabin life to a broad audience of cabin owners:

Hyttemagasinet is a magazine for a new generation of cabin owners; for you that have bought a new cabin or for you that have inherited the family cabin. We will provide you with inspiring and useful information – either if you already own a cabin or dream to become a cabin owner. *Hyttemagasinet* is intended to be a source of inspiration that embraces everything from the modern and grand cabins, to simple and functional cabins. In each issue you will find an architectural ‘pearl’ as well as ‘The readers’ cabin log’. (Hyttemagasinet 2015, my own translation).²⁰

This chapter attempts to answer the following research questions: Which architectural and material tendencies can be observed in cabin representations in Norwegian mass print media from the 1960s and 2013-2014, respectively? Which topics and concepts recur in these accounts, and how do they differ? Can we draw any conclusions as to which categories of meaning of understanding nature are communicated in these two magazines? To answer these questions, this chapter will first offer a brief explanation of one of the methods applied in the analysis: the ‘semiotic square.’ The second and main part of this chapter presents and discusses my findings from both time periods. It is again important to emphasize that I recognize that the analyzed data represents only a sample of manifold cabin designs, ideas, and conceptions, and that the media does not necessarily give a realistic picture of reality. Still, as I attempt to demonstrate, there is a connection between my findings and the larger social and cultural context in Norway which might suggest that there has been a change of mind-set amongst Norwegians during this time. All quotes that are cited here were originally in Norwegian, and are my own translation. The final part of this chapter will attempt to draw some broader conclusions based on these findings. It will be argued that some specific tendencies tend to dominate in each period, and that the findings from each period can be studied both as complete opposites and as redefinitions of the same set of ideas. Three main tendencies can be identified in the 1963 *Bonytt* issue. The cabins were: (1) small, yet spacious with practical solutions; (2) spartan, with a hint of modern interior; and (3) ‘hidden’ in the terrain. In the selected issues of *Hyttemagasinet* 2013-14 very different cabin representations were identified: (1) large size or spaciousness; (2) potential for remodeling (both the interior and structure); (3) comfort; (4) an object of perfection; and

²⁰ Original text in Norwegian: «Hyttemagasinet er magasinet for en ny generasjon hytteeiere; for deg som har kjøpt ny hytte eller for deg som har overtatt familiehytta. Vi gir deg inspirerende og nyttig hyttestoff – enten du allerede har hytte eller drømmer om å bli hytteeier. Hyttemagasinet skal være en inspirasjonskilde som favner alt fra moderne og flotte hytter, til enkle og funksjonelle hytter. I hver utgave finner du en arkitektperle og «Lesernes hyttebok». I Hyttemagasinet plukker du opp nyttige tips fra andre hytteeiere, og du får gode råd fra magasinet egne eksperter» (Hyttemagasinet 2015).

(5) a building where nature is brought indoors. This preliminary sketch indicates that the cabin representations in *Bonytt* in 1963 and *Hyttemagasinet* in 2013-2014 differ significantly, and suggests that the ideal of the Norwegian cabin has changed in this time period. Despite the apparent banality of this general conclusion, semiotic analysis sheds a more profound light on these findings, situating them in a broader socio-economic and cultural context.

The Semiotic Square

The semiotic square, also called the Germanian square (Chandler 2007), is a tool for studying the meaning of signs by envisioning the term in the context of its own contradictory and complementary terms. The purpose of this is to get a better understanding of the term as a binary opposite of another. For example, as Figure 3 illustrates, the two contrary terms, *assertion* and *negation* can be better understood in terms of looking at their binary opposites, *non-negation* and *non-assertion*. The latter two terms refer to ‘absences’. If the assertion (S1) is that something is ‘true’ (S1), then the negation (S2) is that it is false. ‘Non-false’ does not inherently mean the same as if something is true. By adding a layer when looking at a binary opposition – the ‘absent’ version of both terms – the square highlights more dimensions for understanding the relationship between concepts.

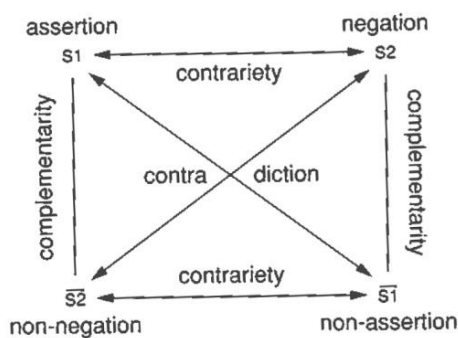


Figure 3: The Semiotic Square (Chandler 2007:107).

Chandler offers a thorough description of the semiotic square and potential relations between the terms (S1, S2, Not S1 and Not S2):

The four corners (S1, S2, Not S1 and Not S2) represent positions within the system which may be occupied by concrete or abstract notions. The double-headed arrows represent bilateral relationships. The upper corners of the Germanian square represent an opposition between S1 and S2 (e.g.

white and black). The lower corners represent positions which are not accounted for in simple binary oppositions: Not S2 and Not S1 (e.g. non-white and non-black). Not S1 consists of more than simply S2 (e.g. that which is not white is not necessarily black). The horizontal relationships represent an opposition between each of the left-hand terms (S1 and Not S2) and its paired right-hand term (Not S1 and S2). The terms at the top (S1 and S2) represent ‘presences’, while their companion terms (Not S1 and Not S2) represent ‘absences’ (Chandler 2007:107).

The relationship between the four corners can thus be described as: “contrariety or opposition (S1/S2); complementarity or implication (S1/Not S2 and S2/Not S1); and contradiction (S1/Not S1 and S2/Not S2)” (Chandler 2007:107).

3.2 1960s Cabin Representations: *Bonytt*



Figure 4: Frontpage *Bonytt* (1963) (facsimile)

The first things that hit you when thumbing through the 1963 issue of *Bonytt* are the colors and graphic design of the front page showing a couple of cabins illuminated by an orange, smiling sun. The magazine has an aged, archival smell, and the matte pages are large. First there are roughly 20 pages of ads of everything from tooth-paste to beds. Then, finally, there is a table of contents, a poem about life at cabins, the preface and then 60 or so pages of representations of ‘real’ cabins. This part of the thesis offers a semiotic analysis of the signifiers of cabin buildings in this issue. In the end I will

present my own account of the ideal cabin as narrated in these texts. I argue that three main themes or motifs recur in the articles of this magazine: (1) Smallness; (2) Simplicity; and (3) Invisibility, in terms of being hidden in the terrain. All these motifs carry deeper meanings of nature and identity. The next section will elaborate more on each one of these motifs before attempting to build an ideal cabin according to these images.

3.2.1 Small, but Spacious Cabins

Of the 15 ‘real’ cabins represented in the 1963 cabin issue of *Bonytt*, only four of them state the exact details on the cabins’ sizes: one 38 m² cabin “plus a shed” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:24); a, 36 ½ m² one “plus a loft with a floor space of about 8 m²” (44 ½ m² in total) (Remlov *et al.* 1963:26); a 42 m² one with “an ‘overbuilt yard’ and shed [which] do not cover more than 42m²” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:22); and a 44 m² one which accommodates six beds, as well as the possibility for “two to sleep in the living room” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:6). There are also two larger cabins: a 65 m² one in Sweden “accommodate[ing] a living room, [combined] dining room-kitchen, and five bedrooms!” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:34). The issue also features a 72 m² cabin (Remlov *et al.* 1963:14). The numbers in the provided floor plans are unclear and difficult to read, but they all seem to accommodate around one living room, two bedrooms, a kitchen, outdoor bathroom and a shed. Information about the size of the cabins featured is lacking in most articles, yet the average of the numbers provided is 51 m². Price is a recurrent topic when size is negotiated in these accounts. This is not that surprising as the finances of the average 1960s family were still quite low which suggests that people had to prioritize where to invest in. It is also mentioned that building legislation prohibits building cabins larger than 40m². If the cabin was built before the legislation, however, the cabin’s size would not be an issue. As legislation was still valid at the time this issue was published, the authors might have been extra cautious to include representations of cabins larger than 40m². Furthermore, there is a significant tendency to mention how to overcome barriers set by size in the studied representations. Family and children are often mentioned in these representations. This indicates that the cabins are regarded as family spaces, so sleeping space is a top priority. Furthermore, in the accounts of *Bonytt*, size is associated with limits and so treated as an inherent problem. Yet, it also poses a challenge, and consequently, *Bonytt*’s pages are filled with smart

solutions to overcome these limits. The cabin representations featured provide ideas for practical space-saving solutions. In the articles, the owners represented all had their own ways of solving this puzzle. Two cabin representations specifically referred to owners that saved space by excluding hallways: “The house has no hallway – thus, every square meter is exploited by the living room, kitchen and bedroom, which have all become spacious” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:10). The 65 m² cabin in Sweden also went for this solution: “The secret is that no space is wasted for hallways” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:34). Another solution that was mentioned specifically in two of the articles was to create the illusion of more space: “The solution of high ceilings makes for large, airy bedrooms, good wardrobe space under the pitched roof, while the first floor besides a big living room and entrance, accommodates an intimate dining room, kitchen, pantry and cistern” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:16). Here it seems like they have space for everything. Meanwhile the other example cleverly utilizes lightening: “The well-lit hallway already gives the impression of a bigger house” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:24). The last example of space-saving solutions demands careful and sophisticated planning: “By simple means it has achieved a striking effect (...) [by subdividing] the house” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:8).

In the above examples, the 1963 *Bonytt* cabin issue communicates at least three key messages. First, more space is desired as it is practical, yet one should make the best out of what one already has. As we can see, the focus is on smart and practical solutions. One can also find a second message in these texts which is a recommendation to already in the planning process consider the possibilities for later expansion: “With the building restrictions for vacation houses in mind, this is an ideal solution: Some rooms can be modified at a later time, and handy cabin owners may fix this with only some or no hired help” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:8). Another article addressed social benefits of expansion:

Guests come easy when you own your own cabin. One can feel the weight of family bonds and indebted to others’ hospitality, and you have enjoyed a favor you would like to return. The pride often associated with being a cabin owner could often result in extending invitations, often without paying enough attention to the consequence of hosting guests in a 40 m² cabin. As it is not allowed to build bigger, when projecting a new cabin it should be taken into consideration that future regulations will allow extension to be added (Remlov *et al.* 1963:40).

The third message that comes across in this account is that one should create the illusion of more space, and that anything is possible with practical and space-efficient solutions. In short, cabin size is often discussed in terms of a broader message that more space would be desired for practical, social and aesthetic reasons, but that there are restrictions and these can (and should) be overcome:

Some might say that you should not expect much of an inexpensive, small house built within ones means, but this is truthfully nonsense. With a tiny bit of planning, even the smallest shed can become a charming house accentuating the place's attraction (Remlov *et al.* 1963:5).

What is slightly confusing here, however, is that the cabin representations featured in the magazine communicate that the main agent supporting and enforcing building restrictions is not the cabin owners that are represented in the articles, nor the authors that select and narrate these representations, but the state and municipal (*kommune*) authorities. This is confusing since the introduction of the magazine is very concerned with preservation of nature and cabin owners' responsibility to be considerate of other people and the local environment. This is also an ongoing topic throughout the magazine (see later in this chapter); yet, the stories they choose to publish in the following articles, and the way they are portrayed also sends the complete opposite message, namely that one should consider and accommodate for opportunities for later expansion. On the other side, in the same articles there seems to be contentment with living in small cabins. Bigger cabins are mentioned, but these are forgotten when the articles communicate that one can enjoy a small cabin just as much. Here we see a very complex and at times contradicting message. Maybe there is even a sense of accomplishment in making the smallest and simplest cabin into a utopian paradise. The Norwegian saying, *man tager hva man haver* (one makes the best out of what one has) is aptly illustrated by cabin owners in the pages of *Bonytt* living by this dictum. But the desire for future additions to Norwegians' nature sanctuaries open a space of negotiation between the competing interests of "small is beautiful" and development of the idea of the 'ideal cabin.'

3.2.2 Consumption: Simple, Inexpensive and Practical Solutions

The patterns of consumption in the context of Norwegian cabins of the early 1960's, as reflected in representations of *Bonytt* reveal an ongoing negotiation process regarding investing one's money. Needless to say, heating, insulation, water and electricity are all elemental aspects of cabins. Two key trends might be identified in the 1963 cabin issue regarding heating and insulation: (1) heating systems should be cheap and efficient; and (2) heating and insulation are often mentioned in relation to the winter season. As to the former, several articles address price and efficiency of heating systems: (A) "The heating [system] is based on an up-to-date and effective stove, ideal for houses of this kind" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:26); (B) "The small and practical constant wood-burning stove is a popular choice amongst cabin owners. Such stoves allow both for heating and simple cooking" (Clayhills 1963:42); and (C):

Those who closely compare the floor plan with the images will notice that the actual location of the chimney is not according to the plan. Instead the smoke-pipe from the stove runs through the room in order to accommodate its heating, which is a cheap heating solution (Remlov *et al.* 1963:10).

Drawing these findings then, heating systems are related to the key-words 'cheap,' 'small,' and 'practical.' There is also a tendency to associate heating systems such as ovens, fireplaces and different kinds of insulation, with the winter season: (1) "The cabin is properly insulated for winter use and can therefore in short time be heated" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:24); (2) "The house is insulated for winter use" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:20); (3) "This is no winter cabin, and thus lacks a fire place" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:8); (4) "The house is winter insulated and has a constant stove" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:6); and (5) "This is a typical sports or weekend cabin, planned for minimum maintenance and heating problems" (...) "Here the owner goes to unwind and live the simple life" (...) "The cabin has full insulation" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:12). In the last example we see that good heating is associated with recreation. Studying opposites then, the opposition of warm, cold, is associated with discomfort. In this article it is not stated that the cabin is warm, yet the absence of cold (Not Cold, see Figure 5) indicates that the cabin is experienced as warm 'enough' to relax.

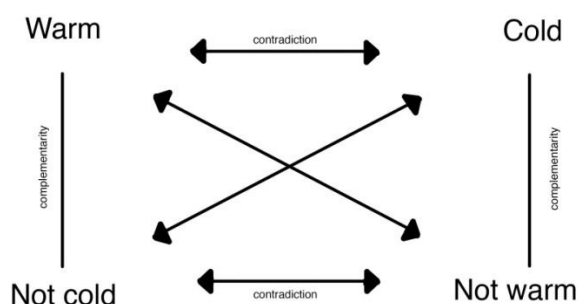


Figure 5: Semiotic square, warm – cold opposition.

But we should note that this is in the winter when such amenities are necessary. In general, heating systems are portrayed as a luxury, most relevant for winter cabins and mainly available for those who can afford it. Again this supports that heating systems and cost-effectiveness are two sides of one coin. The mantra is to make a cost-effective heating system that satisfies the basic needs for heating. Two interesting labels in this context are winter cabins and summer cabins. Cabins are referred to as a product of their function. If an oven and insulation are installed, the cabin becomes a winter cabin. If not it functions well as a summer cabin and heating systems are not further discussed. It seems like necessity is constantly renegotiated and that one can choose to see the best in any situation. Again we can observe contentment with the way things are and a focus of the opportunities of already present facilities.

Very few of the accounts of our *Bonytt* issue features representations of cabins that are connected to either water or electricity grids. Only one cabin article specifically details that a cabin has both water and electricity. This is a tale of fortunate cabin owners who have had their cabin built as part of already made infrastructure: “The cabin has a great benefit from its location inside the area of the previous buildings; it gets access to water and electricity by connecting to the communal plant” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:37). This cabin also features a sauna and a small pool which indicates that it is more luxurious than the other cabins shown in this issue. There are only two other cabin representation that specifically states that water is installed, and one of these represented cabins is located in Sweden. It is, however, mentioned that this cabin was built to be a year-round cabin, intended as a home for retirement, which could increase the demand for such facilities. It is not clear from the other texts in the issue whether or not water and electricity are desired. These cabin representations are also more simple and spartan which might indicate contentment – a general appreciation of what they have rather than wishing for something else. It could be for financial reasons, that they are happy ‘just’

to own a cabin. And it can be that they do not consider these facilities part of their cabin concept.

Furthermore, most of the articles show a preference for low-maintenance cabins. Words such as ‘cheap’ or ‘inexpensive’ (*‘billig’*) and ‘simple’ are also recurrent concepts in this context: “The building program is ready – a cheap, yet relatively spacious house, simple, almost maintenance free – the short summers should not demand more work than absolutely necessary for the cabin owner” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:12, my italics). Here simple is synonymous with less work, i.e. maintenance free. Another reoccurring word is ‘necessary.’ We can see all the above mentioned words applied in another cabin representation about a cabin owner that has turned an old shed into a cabin:

The outdoor house was in such a bad condition that it was deemed advisable just to carry out the most *necessary* steps to allow for summer stays. Some of the windows and doors were replaced with the old ones stored in the loft and the shed. Some interior walls were torn down so that it became two rooms, one for sleeping and a living room with a kitchen area. The owner was *attracted to the place*, and therefore initiated the *necessary* steps to turn the shed into a proper house. A terrace and an *outdoor kitchen* were built – later on, an additional bedroom for the children was added. As the house now had become habitable to the degree that it made sense to replace rotten sleepers and beams with a hired hand, as such work is a *difficult and boring* leisure activity (Remlov *et al.* 1963:28, my italics).

The above account suggests that it first is prioritized to do only the most necessary changes so that it can be used in the summers, and that the owner is willing to take on this work as he is interested in the location. Work is in both above quotes considered a necessary prerequisite of having a cabin, but one that should not take fully over the time at the cabin. Similar to some cabins in Denmark, Switzerland and Italy, one of the cabin representations features a cabin that is intelligently built to decrease the need for maintenance:

Various kinds of this type of housing are often featured in journals. In Denmark, Switzerland and Italy this model is often used for holiday housing in the mountains and at the lowlands. This is an inexpensive solution that demands little maintenance (Remlov *et al.* 1963:26).

Interesting to note, the word ‘inexpensive’ is used also in this account. Another article elaborates more specifically on how to build a cabin with less need for maintenance:

“Considering decreasing the level of maintenance: No indoor wall or roof surfaces are painted, everything stands with unfurnished wood, which after some time adapts the golden wood silk sheen. Colours are brought indoors by textiles and different details” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:12). In the representations above some concepts are reoccurring: cheap, low maintenance, less work and outdoors. The above findings also suggest that most of the work is done by the owner, without hired help. This might indicate that holidays consisted of significant work and maintenance tasks. The fact that the texts express an aim for solutions that allows for less maintenance and a wish amongst some owners to have more time for fun at the cabin both support this claim. In other words, it seems like the motivation for building the shed into a cabin was to stay outdoors with maintenance (inherent in the choice of building and using the cabin) and other (more fun) activities.

The same concepts may be observed in sentences referring to the daily use of cabins. In *Bonytt* (1963) cabins should be practical without imposing a spartan lifestyle. According to these articles, the cabin owners are preoccupied with all sorts of smart solutions for everyday use: “It is a robust house that does not demand meticulous order or cautious use, precisely appropriate for vacations” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:16); “The family’s washing area with a spacious sink and hot water boiler can be seen to the left” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:33). Some cabins are indeed so spartan that it is too uncomfortable to stay over longer periods at a time:

The big 20m² living room enjoys a lot of daylight and is easily furnished. The solution of two bunk beds in the kitchen is an old idea, but highly practical when the space is limited. The cabin is meant for weekends and short holidays –for longer holidays in the summertime the ‘bedroom in the kitchen’ -solution is not recommended (Remlov *et al.* 1963:24).

In this example, comfort is sacrificed for the cabin experience. Moreover, in this tale spartan and not comfortable are considered complimentary elements, and spartan and comfortable are thereby deemed contradictory terms (Figure 6).

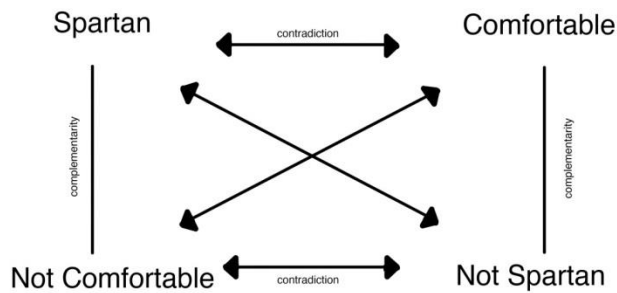


Figure 6: Semiotic square, spartan – comfortable opposition.

Therefore the trade-off for choosing a spartan lifestyle is that practical solutions that could be considered uncomfortable are good enough, i.e. it is easy to make room for everyone even if someone has to sleep on a bench. In contrast, a couple of the cabins features in the same magazine had some extra space to spare. One example is a Swedish cabin where:

The plan allows for a large living room and three bedrooms as usual, thereto the shed is built together with the house and at the end of the shed is a carport for the family's car – more people should have the latter in mind when planning – the 'treasured' car should of course have its own room! (Remlov *et al.* 1963:31).

Another quote about a Danish cabin indicated that certain things should be given more space: “Likewise, if possible, one should ensure enough wardrobe space, not least for outdoor clothing. Precisely in vacations by the sea and the mountains, the selection of clothing, boots, fishing gear, etc. is necessary” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:14). While the first quote might be considered an exception – a Swedish cabin with its own garage might be irrelevant for the Norwegian readers – the last quote notes the necessity of being well equipped for outdoor activities and might be well received amongst Norwegian cabin owners who spend a great share of time outdoors and only have limited opportunities for washing clothes at their cabin. These are however exceptions from cabins abroad. Spartan ideas of simplicity and practicality are more common, sometimes at the cost of comfort.

For the housewife there might have been a connection between primitivism and complication. This perspective is represented in some of the articles:

The dream kitchen for a housewife, also during the summer months – is romantic, yet a bit cumbersome as everything should be primitive enough

to meet the rest of the family's expectations for the 'right' holiday experience (Remlov *et al.* 1963:33).

How primitive should it be at the cabin? There exist those who choose not to install electricity even where this might be feasible, which shows how much they love the constant wood-burner for cooking and paraffin lamps for lighting, but what about the perspective of the housewife? If the family is big, the life of the housewife might become complicated. She is likely to welcome as many modern facilities as possible during her holiday (Clayhills 1963:41).

In the context of recent technological advances that had made housekeeping less burdensome, the return to a simple standard might have been poorly received by housewives. Here, complicated or cumbersome might describe housewives' life at the cabin. As the semiotic square informs us (Figure 7), non-cumbersome is complementary to practical:

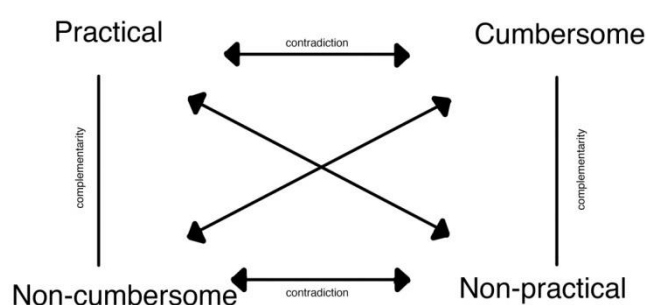


Figure 7: Semiotic square, practical – cumbersome opposition.

The term 'practical' appears in the same accounts. As does 'modern solutions,' which seem to be considered synonymous with 'choice'. One article discusses this specifically. According to this account, the cabin should be the perfect mix of simplicity, practical solutions and modern equipment:

What first and foremost excels is a thorough processing of details, for example a brilliant common washing area with a sink and water grid for the use of the whole family, a well-designed kitchen – which may also be necessary in the summers – good design details in the simple bedrooms and last but not least, the outdoor area is well equipped. There you can find a sheltered space with firm benches and tables for dining, an outdoor fireplace against the ocean and a small HOKK, with space for a washing sink and for drying of clothing, details that are both useful and a delight for the housewife. Everything is consistently good quality and there is coherence indoors and between interior and exterior which makes a harmonious impression (Remlov *et al.* 1963:31).

This tale features practical solutions, materials of good quality, and generally well-designed areas for food preparation, and a water grid is part of this ideal. The task of making the cabin spartan and traditional – but still practical and modern – is apparently a challenging one.

Yet, the cabin kitchen does not have to become a streamlined copy of the town kitchen. Coziness and rough materials might well be combined with today's practical cookers. Our designer (...) suggests an unconventional arrangement with a plate section and a (...) cooker in the picture above. Imagine that the cupboards were custom built by a local carpenter (Clayhills 1963:41).

Here is an example of how the cabin kitchen can be different from the town kitchen. The right atmosphere can be achieved by mixing 'rough' interiors with 'modern' and 'practical' utilities. The modern is conceived as an intrusion to the cabin-sphere, but traditional interiors keep the cabin traditional. Consequently, the cabin and the owners' experience there continue to signify a place that stands in contrast with life at 'home' in the city.

In sum, very few of the cabins described in *Bonytt* have water or electricity, and insulation and heating systems are considered synonymous with winter cabins. The cabins were usually very simple, and made to reduce labor-intensive maintenance. In these accounts, the cabins are spartan and some articles mention the uncomfortable and cumbersome aspects of life at the cabin. In most of the excerpts above, the cabin in *Bonytt* is conceptualized as a small and simple holiday house with endless opportunities for the innovative owner. Still, some articles suggest ideas for expansion and modernization, and such developments are to a degree justified in these representations. The quote below is on the Danish cabin:

As revealed by the heading, this vacation house is built with permanent residence in mind. One has saved some here and there, yet for modest sums the house can be brought to the standard of normal Danish housing. To a far greater degree than here in Norway, the tendency in Denmark is to build vacation houses with the intention to withdraw to enjoy one's retirement in beautiful and peaceful surroundings. It does not cost much more to build fully insulated walls, roof and floor, and to facilitate for year-round living (Remlov *et al.* 1963:14).

First, one must note that the statement above addresses the owners' intention to live at the cabin permanently when they retire, and that this might be a main motivation for bringing the cabin up to its high standard. The costs are also represented in another way than in the other cabin representations. The fact that it is not considered expensive to insulate demonstrates a different budgetary mindset than in the other articles. Other statements in the same article are similar: "In the planning process, builders of vacation houses should put the demand for a common washing and toilet room high on their list" (Remlov *et al.* 1963:14). Interestingly, foreign cabins are represented here as positive and appealing narratives of increased consumption and expansion, despite the fact that the authors of the magazine at the same time argue for spartan cabins with smart solutions. As the next section will demonstrate, they also advocate carefully positioned cabins that do not ruin the local environment or nature experiences for other people.

3.2.3 Discussing Ethics: Cabins that are Hidden in the Terrain

The cabin representations *Bonytt* also frequently allude to a broad agreement that cabins should be hidden in the terrain. It should be mentioned that this is also a recurring topic in *Aftenposten* and *A-magasinet* in the 1960s. 7 of 19 articles in *Bonytt* specifically mention that a cabin is or should be placed hidden in the terrain (5 of these are 'real' cabins, all considered successfully hidden). 2 of the 12 remaining articles represent cabins that are categorized as terrain-friendly, which means that their location and character take other housing in the same area and their neighbors' privacy into consideration. Of the remaining 10 articles, 8 are representations of 'real' cabins. In 3 of these representations the terrain is mentioned, for example against a mountain wall, but not in a moralistic sense). This leaves us with 5 of 19 cabin representations that do not mention the cabin's location in the terrain. In other words, the location of the cabin in the terrain is given a significant degree of attention. As my analysis indicates, this is also a moral issue. The concepts and images used in the studied texts suggest that there are two stories linked to the cabin and its terrain, one about the 'wrong' cabin and another about the 'right' one. According to the cabin representations there is no doubt about the wrong or the right way to place a cabin:

The reef has always hosted only the seagulls, and longtime residents of the vacation paradise of the surrounding islands did not look gladly on the extended building of houses in the area. Now, however, they have *all*

reason to happily look at what has been built, as it could not have been made more *gently*. For the nearest *neighbors* in the East, the house is so to speak *not visible*, by the manner of how it is placed in the terrain, and from the other sides of the sea there is not much more of the house to be seen. The placement can be considered *an example of considerate building*. To get a real picture of the house the photographer had to place the camera high on top of the neighboring reef (Remlov *et al.* 1963:6).

This is an image of a gently placed cabin, invisible to the neighbors on account of its placement. Now the owners can be proud of their achievement. Ideally, the cabin should be so well hidden that it is difficult to photograph. This is also mentioned in another cabin representation in the magazine: “The summerhouse as shown on this page was not easily photographed – it is placed so gently and hidden in the terrain” (Remlov *et al.* 1963:8). In other words, a well-hidden cabin was perceived as an appropriate, considerate, and even friendly gesture towards nature and people alike, whereas the more visible cabin was considered aesthetically and environmentally disturbing. The opposite, visible or revealing, carries negative connotations. Furthermore, the concept of ‘modern’ is synonymous with unfriendly in these accounts.

The terrain is mountainous and it is the friendliness the cabin represents as a contrast to the barren terrain that is the motivation behind featuring this house [in *Bonytt*]. Further away on the plain is a completely flat modern house that is not inviting. This represents today’s program. (Remlov *et al.* 1963:16)

In other words, to place the cabin as ‘invisible’ the terrain gives you social capital. Failing to hide the cabin, however, might make it difficult to make friends. Furthermore, the introductory text of the magazine argues that the latter is a product of human failure:

The ugliness is about to spread powerfully along the fjords and in the mountains, an ugliness that is in no need of further introduction. One can go out on a limb and claim that *individual contrivance*, the *picturesque* and the *naively helpless* also have their charm that to a certain degree makes up for the *lack of nobler, aesthetic capacities*. Still, even with this attitude you can only get upset by it, if you for example should take a trip in the Skåtøy district. And what is most devastating is that this wretchedness is caused by of conditions that were supposed to appeal to our best instincts; an increased possibility for leisure, and an increased opportunity to enjoy it whenever one wishes (Brochmann 1963:2, my own italics).

Here ‘ugliness,’ ‘individual contrivance,’ and the ‘picturesque’ are considered a ‘lack of nobler, aesthetic capacities’ and ‘naively helpless,’ in other words it is the wrong way. Underlying this language is a moral tone in which suggests that Norwegians (including the readers of this magazine) should develop their aesthetic and moral sense. Furthermore, such negative traits may pose a threat to the cabin tradition and life in the open air. The same article compares these negative developments with traditional Norwegian cultural landscapes: “For us this cabin extension is considered especially grim, we cannot help but compare it with what already exists: the mountain *seter* hamlet and the coast cluster of small housing (...)” (Brochmann 1963:2). I argue that these previous cultural landscapes signify deeper national ideas, which might be challenged by the current transition. A landscape is according to this understanding a cultural heritage, shaped mainly by farming activities – and that landscape was being increasingly invaded by tourists and their cabins. The cabin owners, the author argues, must pay attention to this dilemma. The fact that this is the introductory text of a cabin interiors magazine indicates the importance of this dilemma for cabin owners of the time. Another article also addresses this dilemma and the responsibility of the individual cabin owner:

That it is important to consider vegetation and terrain should be a given for everyone, and when one chooses a plot it is due to an attraction to the surroundings of the location, to nature foremost, but also to the possibility of harmonious and beautifully placed buildings. It should be evident that they themselves have to make sure that the environment does not transform more than necessary and that one does not destroy it with a poorly placed or ugly and randomly shaped house (Remlov *et al.* 1963:5).

So what is a poorly placed cabin according to the descriptions above? A poorly placed cabin does not consider vegetation and terrain and is not in harmony with the landscape. It is visible, ugly, individual, and attention seeking. At times the word ‘modern’ is used as an umbrella term for such qualities. This type of cabin is also considered a burden on the local environment. It does not seem like the authors of *Bonytt* were impressed with certain cabins on the Norwegian landscape, and they suggested that if the owners proved unwilling to show consideration for their surroundings, others should take control over the situation:

To preach a moral, that people are supposed to adhere to one another, does not do any good. Not due to immorality, but who is supposed to adhere to

whom? To appoint a council of aesthetics does not do any good either. Their scope of authority will always be very limited (...). Then one may trust the market, as stimulated by an increased standard of living, to increasingly produce ready-made houses (Brochmann 1963:3-4, my own italics).

When each year we are forced to witness unsightly houses built in beautiful nature, the government and resident's associations should do society and the individuals a favor, and use all means necessary to control what is projected and built in the future, especially where we are to enjoy our holidays (Remlov *et al.* 1963:5).

The above comments and instructions show almost desperation to avoid ugly new cabin housing developments. As mentioned chapter 1, there is a fear that such developments pose a threat to the local environment, but there appears to be an equal risk to the human eye and the aesthetics of the landscape. Inherent in the latter is a belief that one should consider other people's right to roam, which includes what they observe when they are out in nature. I argue that both the above arguments for (forced) gentleness can be read as signifiers for a Norwegian conception of the rural as our natural state of origin. As chapter 2 emphasizes, the countryside is central to the idea of Norwegian identity and the cabin is part of a cultural heritage. Nature and rural culture construct the fundament of a shared national culture in Norway. In context of the abovementioned findings it is fruitful to revisit Sinding-Larsen's two main reasons for this aspect of Norway's national identity: (1) a quest for national sovereignty; and (2) "the need to redefine peasant society (and nature) as something bygone and romantic that could be part of the dreams of the new urbanized everyday life" (Sinding-Larsen 1984:128). To rebel against rural ideas of local community and the environment thus consequently threatens the national project and the idea of the cabin as something different from life in the city. According to these guidelines, the placement of the cabin in the terrain signifies who the Norwegian is in the city and at the cabin. Revisiting Klausen's model for understanding the state vs rural in Norwegian culture as presented in the previous chapter (Klausen 1984:65), in the city the Norwegian engages in non-personal and centralized relations often in the context of hierarchical structures and governance, i.e. the Norwegian is part of a state. At the cabin, on the other hand, Norwegian-ness relates to the rural through personal relations in an egalitarian community, the Norwegian is part of a nation. To overlook the local ecosystem and local community is therefore considered a threat to something bigger: the shared national project.

3.2.4 The 'Ideal' Cabin and Representations in *Bonytt* (1963)

Let us enter the ideal cabin as it is represented in *Bonytt*. We are by a cabin in the forest, and as we enter the cabin cold air meets us. However, this does not matter as it is June, and warmer than in the winter. In fact, this is not a winter-cabin so it is not intended for winter use. It is good that we arrived in the daytime as it is easier to put on bedding and linen and to prepare today's dinner in daylight rather than candlelight. Of course there is no electricity or water. Water we have to carry from a nearby well. Dinner we have to cook on a wood stove, gas cooker, or bonfire. Everyone has a task to accomplish. The family father is already on his way to get some firewood, while the mother is preparing dinner. The children are playing with a set of cards although they were told to put on the bed linen. The smell and sound of pinewood in the fireplace is starting to spread in the living room. The cabin might have been built with further expansion in mind, but for now they are happy with the cabin the way it is. However, the kitchen is a bit cumbersome, and the housewife might wish for more modern facilities.

3.2.5 Conclusions

There are three main motifs that are recurrent in the articles of this magazine: (1) the emphasis on small cabins that are (2) simple, yet practical and space efficient and (3) hide in the terrain. These tendencies must be seen in a broader national cultural context. The former two follow the mantra *man tager hva man haver* (one takes what one has got, and makes the best out of it). A spartan lifestyle is considered just as good as a more comfortable way of life. Yet, some articles encourage expansion and modernization. There is in other words a constant negotiation process between competing interests. The same goes for the third imperative: cabins should be situated considerately in the terrain. This is a moral message of care for the local environment and people. As I have argued, this mentality should be examined in light of a greater national project of preserving local and personal relations. Here the cabin signifies something different from 'home,' the former representing the local (nation) and the latter the central (state). Some recurrent concepts and oppositions are 'local' vs 'central,' 'small' (or not too big) vs 'big,' 'traditional' vs 'modern,' 'cold' vs 'warm,' and spartan (not comfortable but cozy) vs (implicit) luxurious and wasteful. It should also be mentioned that the average standard of primary housing in the 1960s was not

anything near the standard of houses today. Nor were the pockets of cabin owners as deep.

3.3 The Years 2013 and 2014: Cabin Representations in *Hyttemagasinet*

As the next section demonstrates, representations of the cabin in my data set from *Hyttemagasinet* (2013 – 2014) are quite different from the cabin as represented in *Bonytt* from 1963. Still, there are interesting trends in the cultural ideas associated with the modern cabin and this will be discussed in further detail. My research suggests that there are five main motifs in these articles: (1) the articles portray large cabins; (2) there is an echoing tale of constant renewal of the cabin and its interiors; (3) there is a search for solutions which increase comfort; (4) a general goal of perfection; and (5) a focus of bringing nature indoors. As will be discussed, these tendencies are signs of a cabin ideal that can be seen in contrast to the 1960s ideal in *Bonytt*. By further examination, however, the underlying aspects of these developments are surprisingly similar.

3.3.1 Room for Social Life and Status: Large Cabins

Aage Thoresen had to put 32.5 million on the table for a hunting and fishing cabin and 22 000 acre at Hardangervidda. The cabin had an asking price of 20 million kroners, which means that Thoresen had to give 12.5 million more than the asking price, which makes the cabin the most expensive ever sold in the Norwegian mountains. Supposedly, a number of finance celebrities were amongst the interested for the property, located in a nature reserve in the Hol region (Berg 2014a:12).

The quote above is taken from one of the opening articles in an issue of *Hyttemagasinet*. Although the cabin representations of *Hyttemagasinet* do not feature this kind of ‘fairy-tale’ cabin, one can identify a great tendency towards expansion. Many articles emphasize the need for more space for new generations. Social life is also emphasized by many of the cabin owners when discussing their planning process. Despite having airy and spacious cabins, saving space is still a concern, and some owners wish for more space. However, there are also tales of owners resisting this trend. These owners appreciate the simplicity of a simpler and smaller building. The first part of this section addresses three representations of cabins that have been rebuilt or expanded. It will be

argued that making more room for friends and family is a top priority. As will be demonstrated, social life at cabins is emphasized frequently in the selected issues of *Hyttemagasinet*. Despite a few exceptions, the cabins in *Hyttemagasinet* are large.

The cabins presented in *Hyttemagasinet* come in a variety of sizes. They range from 50 m² (Bjurstrøm 2013:34) to 78 m² (“Hytta var fiks...” 2013:128), 85 (“Stolt Fyr!” 2014: 83), 90 m² (Kalgraff 2013a:18), 220 m² (Henriksen 2014:38); and to a cabin that is “nicely counted” twice as big as its predecessor (145 m²) which means that it is at least 290 m² (Østmoe 2014:47). Many of these started as old cabins, dating from the 1930s to the 1970s, that were bought or inherited by the current owners, and have since been either expanded or replaced by a new cabin. To demonstrate this, we will further investigate three different examples of this scenario.

The first article, “Inspired by Barns,” features a Danish geologist hungry for more space who built a cabin with the intention of retiring in it. For now, the article informs the reader, the cabin is a place for gatherings with friends and appreciating Norwegian nature. It all started with a new project three years after having completed another cabin, “the geologist wanted something bigger, but at the same location. A new plot was already bought and (the architect) began sketching at the drawing board (Henriksen 2014:34). To the reader it might come as a surprise that he built a new cabin so quickly after completing the first, but he had his reasons: “The first was a more traditional Norwegian cabin, but a bit small. And then you have to try a couple of times before you get what you want, he says with a smile” (Henriksen 2014:34). Unlike most of the cabin representations in *Bonytt* from 1963, the owner of this cabin can afford to build a second and larger cabin. The reader is also informed that there are several motivations behind this choice to expand:

At 220 m² the cabin is so big so that that I can have a lot of guests. And much time is spent here in the dining area. So it is exactly the right size, he says. In addition there is an annex of around 20 square metres. He also has his office where he manages his consulting firm when he is not in Scotland. Next to his office is a spacious sauna specially imported from Finland and brought to Numedal. The goal is to settle up here the day I retire (Henriksen 2014:38).

With its four bedrooms, two living rooms and three bedrooms, the cabin should have enough space for the geologist to realize his dreams (Henriksen 2014:38). The second

article depicts a cabin that had become too small for the family. They tore down the old and built a new one:

We froze, as did water and sewage, (the owner) remembers. Aside from lacking facilities, the place was easy to fall in love with. As a result, it was not long before the family started to talk about total renovation. The old cabin from 1938 accommodated multiple annexes and terraces. All in all, it covered 145 m². Today it has a full cellar and the living area is thus doubled. – This is probably a generous estimate, (the owner) admits, and adds that they have always kept a good dialogue with the local administration (ensuring that building regulation is upheld) (Østmoe 2014:47).

This is a tale of an old and small family cabin with poor facilities. After having read *Bonytt* from 1963, however, it is apparent that this cabin is twice the size of the biggest cabin that was presented. Furthermore, we get an indication that the main motive behind their grand expansion was social: “There was only room for two to four people. When they first rebuilt, they could all easily fit inside. The cabin now sleeps 14, plus 5-6 children divided on three different lofts” (Østmoe 2014:45). In contrast, the old cabin is described as “small, cute and colorful, but way too little room for family and friends” (Østmoe 2014:54). The new cabin has room not only for the immediate family but also extended family and friends. According to the article they know what they want to spend their time and energy on at the cabin: “the social part, says the couple that happily opens the doors to 100 guests” (Østmoe 2014:45).

The third article features a couple that added 34 m² to their 70 m² cabin. The cabin dates back to 1962 and was inherited by the owner: “When (the owner) inherited the place from her parents, another project was realized. Another log cabin was brought to the plot and was built together with the existing one” (Wahlström 2013:26). Her husband “made sure that the sauna house was rebuilt as an extra bedroom, it became enough space to accommodate a wood oven and bunk beds” (Wahlström 2013:26). This last cabin is smaller than many of the other cabins in these issues, and one may note that the sauna house was turned into more practical space.

The cases above exemplify that space for guests is a motivation for large cabins. This is also mentioned by other cabin owners in *Hyttemagasinet*:

There has to be family, friends, colleagues and acquaintances, and when (the owner) sends out the SMS in May with which weeks he is going to the cabin, everyone knows that it is first-come-first-served to book a room before the cabin is full. When you are single you know you have to make some effort and search for people in another way (...) I have a lot of friends who are in the same life situation but also many with kids. Big or small, they are all very welcome (Gleditsch 2013a:40).

There are also other articles that specifically mention the importance of social life at cabins: “The house has enough space for the whole family or friends, and in the summers we have had lots of visitors. The house was built in 1918 and has an area of around 85 square meters on two floors. So it is enough space for both young and old” (“Stolt Fyr!” 2014:83); and “Many visitors. Even though (the owner) does not have a family, he wanted to have a spacious cabin where friends and family could gather as often as possible” (Henriksen 2014:34).

The cabins in these representations are bigger than the cabins represented in the 1963 issue of *Bonytt*. The size is not a topic as such, only by extension. Moreover, few articles critically discuss the size of cabins. One author in *Hyttemagasinet* does however address this: “And when it is finally (almost) completed and friends and family settle, the happiness is perfect. For a while. For what are we to do now? Build a new annex? Or just a new fence? Dig a ditch, maybe? Plant a hedge? Lay some new tiles?” (Nielsen 2013a:130). Although the word large not is frequently used, unlike the word small in *Bonytt* (1963), it is still interesting to look at the deeper meanings of this concept. The semiotic square may be used also in this context.

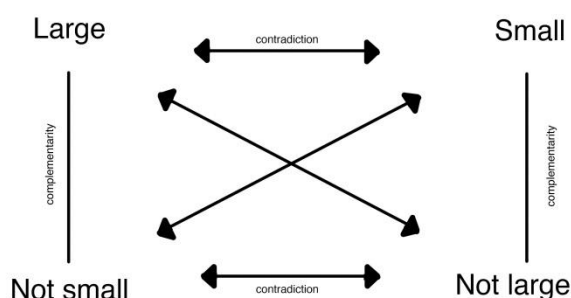


Figure 8: Semiotic square, large - small opposition.

‘Large’ and ‘not small’ are complementary. When something is not small it is not necessarily large. In this context however, the new cabins have in some cases six times more space than the cabins in *Bonytt*. If the cabin is 100m² it is also double the size of

many city apartments. In principle, when something is large it cannot be small. When something is small this might be cumbersome. When something is large however, one is freed from many issues related to a small living area. In this way, size might be associated with freedom and conviviality. For example, at home one might own many things and feel ‘drowned’ in things. Yet, there are things at home, which represent everything but freedom: things associated with everyday responsibilities. At the cabin one can escape these signs of structure and in the cabins of *Hyttemagasinet* size is not in short supply.

3.3.2 Replacing the Old with the New

Renewal is a recurrent concept in *Hyttemagasinet*’s articles, and variations of the word ‘new’ appear approximately 30 times in issue 9 2013 (although this word is less used in issue 2 2014). This is in contrast to *Bonytt*, where versions of the word ‘new’ are only mentioned eight times. As previously mentioned, a common phenomenon is to build new cabins, or renew old ones. But the word new also occurs in texts referring to topics such as interiors and consumption:

The family wanted to give the cabin a light face-lift, without much intervention. Approximately 19 years went by before the family thought the time was here. -We wanted something new, (the owner) says. - It was important for us to replace bright colors on textiles and furniture with light, natural colours. The cabin got a more modern look that still harmonizes with the antiquities in the cabin. The family chose to keep the walls, roof and floor in their original state. Instead the focus was to change colors of furniture and textiles. (Hertzberg 2013:58-59)

In the above account at least two concepts deserve further attention. First, the term ‘new’ is understood in terms of replacing the old (Figure 9). That something is new does not necessarily mean that it cannot be old. Moreover, an article may be perceived differently by sellers, consumers and others.

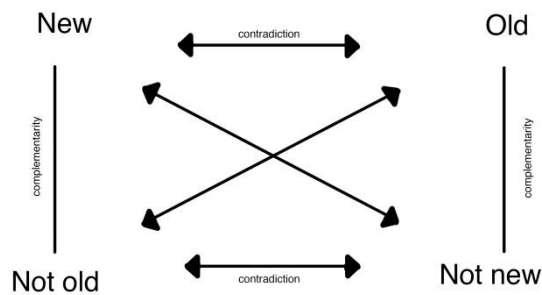


Figure 9: Semiotic square, new – old opposition.

Second, the term ‘new’ is somehow interlinked with the ‘modern.’ This connection starts to map out a valuable pattern. It is easy to presume that the word ‘modern’ stands in opposition to ‘traditional.’ On the contrary, its opposite is not the ‘traditional,’ but the anti-modern (Figure 10) – actively resisting modern developments. ‘Modern,’ is, however, a positive term with regards to consumer choice and constant renewal. In other words, it actively works against the Spartan (‘anti-modern’ or at least ‘not modern’) uncomfortable and outdated.

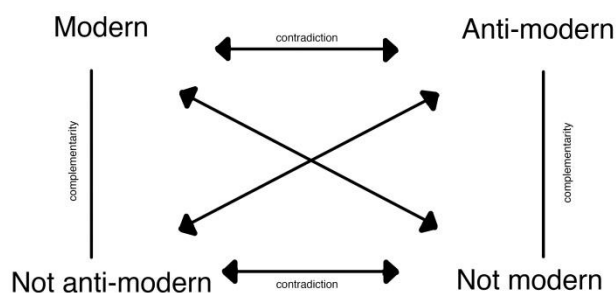


Figure 10: Semiotic square, modern - anti-modern opposition.

The two terms may in this context represent liberation, freedom and the reinvention of identity. In the same article it is also stated that their project has brought a significant change: “new bright curtains and floor carpets were bought. These almost match the other colors that characterize the cabin. These are relatively simple measures that still make a big change. Yet, the pine kitchen had to be fully renovated” (Hertzberg 2013:60). This tendency can be linked to bigger trends in modern society, what Witoszek characterize as “the quintessential principle of modern capitalism with its Schumpeterian creative destruction: an endless process of replacing the old with the new” (Witoszek 2012:120). One can buy new decorations and interiors and create a totally different impression or style. In this lies a liberating aspect, freed from the chains of the old one can now reinvent the style of the cabin and enjoy “a more modern touch”

(Hertzberg 2013:63). Through the process “innovate, destroy and create anew,” the cabin owners stand free to reinvent themselves and their cabin (Witoszek 2012:120).

One of the authors in *Hyttemagasinet* wrote a separate article on this phenomenon; here he asserts a critical view of the evolution of Norwegian cabin culture. According to his account, his reflections on this topic were triggered by his own experience rebuilding the kitchen at his cabin: “My project has not been the biggest, yet it has resulted in the fact that a large part of what we have is going to be replaced and new solutions have made it necessary to renew much of the interior” (Berg 2013b:9). The author mentions some new modules replacing the old at IKEA and that their old kitchen had “a convoluted and impractical solution” (Berg 2013b:9). In the article he argues that it is almost impossible to sell something second hand in Norway, and that it is difficult to give away things for free as most people want only the new.

In 2013 in Norway everything shall be new. Used and old is not good enough, and this bothers me when, at the end of it all, it might mean that we have to throw it all away. Or give it to the flea market (where it might be rejected). For example, they do not want appliances, not even televisions unless they are a flat-screen, no bulky standing lamps (!), no IKEA furniture! (...). People want more, and it should be new. I am not sure about how charming this is, and I cheer slightly for Rasmus Hansson in the Green Party. This I would not have guessed some weeks ago – before we started to renovate (Berg 2013b:9).

The above statements and the frequency of the word ‘new’ in the issues of *Hyttemagasinet* signify a shift from necessity (in the accounts of *Bonytt*) to the modern. Moreover, the mantra of taking what one has already got and making the best out of it is replaced with the myth of constant renewal – in principle. In principle, because something new soon becomes old and the cabin representations of *Hyttemagasinet* show people that are pleased with their processes of renewing. This might imply that they feel more at home and have a somehow stable sense of style. *Hyttemagasinet* spreads tales of successful processes of renewal as examples and inspiration. This can be anything from a lick of paint to a total demolition and renovation. In short, one can argue that the cabin as it is represented in *Hyttemagasinet* signifies a new start through liberation from the old.

3.3.3 Comfortable Cabins: Warm, Entertaining and Convenient

Many of the articles in *Hyttemagasinet* suggest that comfort is an important part of the cabin experience. Some express this explicitly: the owners “wanted a comfortable and nice base” (Fossan 2014:17); and “when one is at the cabin one should be comfortable” (Gleditsch 2013a:42). There are many accounts in *Hyttemagasinet* of comfortable life in cabins. One can divide these accounts into three main categorical clusters: (1) Heating and insulation; (2) Entertainment; and (3) Other luxurious items (saunas and bathtubs are typical). According to these articles, electricity is a given at cabins, and cabins are usually well heated, with a little help from recent technology such as “Call the cabin warm” (see ch.1). But the fireplace is still important both as a source of heat and as a gathering place. Interestingly, electricity as such is rarely mentioned. Studying texts and images, however, it becomes apparent that most cabins are equipped with digital electrical appliances, floor heating, et cetera, which indicates that there is full electricity in those cabins:

It has not been long since floor heating was non-existent in Norwegian cabins. The time is past when one went to the cabin vigorously to stoke the fireplace to get the temperature indoors up to a tolerable level. Today cabins are increasingly permanently heated. This implies a more stable and healthier indoor climate – especially for the wooden floors (Berg 2013c:72).

This development surely has its benefits. And, as previously mentioned, shorter visits to the cabin have become more typical (see paragraph 2.5). As one cabin owner mentions, new and better heating systems make life at the cabin more comfortable, and the transition between home and the cabin easier:

I wanted more comfort and to make it easier get here and to stay. My father agreed, and gave his permission to do as I wished, although he disagreed with throwing out the old paraffin oven. But it made the one bedroom smell like paraffin. I have also made many changes since he left us. And I know that he would have appreciated many of them. For example, after a while, I changed the windows. It made a significant difference. With new windows and ‘Call the cabin warm,’ the cabin is fully heated eight hours faster than it used to. A new fireplace oven also helps (Gleditsch 2013a:44).

Many articles also refer to the fireplace as a nice addition to other sources of heat, and consider it a nice detail that creates the right atmosphere: “A new fireplace from Scan

comes handy on cold days. It quickly warms up the cabin. I put a bunch of screws into the beam above it to easily dry wet textiles. Next to the fireplace is an old spinning wheel” (Gleditsch 2013a 2013:40); “The fireplace is in many ways the heart of the cabin. It functions as a gathering place, joy spreader and heater” (“Drømmen fra A...” 2014:61).

(The architect) wanted to install a combined outdoor and indoor fireplace. Thankfully he was not of the stubborn type. The family (...) argued that such a fireplace would be too visible if they sat indoors. If they were to use it outside, they had to turn their backs to the seafront (...). The solution was a Contura 5,85 oven in the kitchen and a bond fire pan outside. (Østmoe 2014:50).

It becomes evident that the fireplace represents more than heating in the above accounts. The fireplace has a deeper meaning in which it is inseparable from one of the most important concepts of Norwegian culture: *koselig*. There is no word in the English vocabulary that covers the full meaning of *koselig*, but it is close to coziness. For Norwegians the word *koselig* is often associated with a source of heat (a fireplace, candles), warm colors (dimmed light, pine-wood walls, deep red), and good company (which means absence of conflict). In addition, a *koselig* time is usually best enjoyed after first being exposed to harsh weather or outdoor activities before going indoors to enjoy shelter, heat, and safety. In other words, *koselig* is an ideal night at the cabin. In fact, *koselig* is so important that it may influence Norwegians’ social life – the more *koselig* you are, the more friendly you seem. The word ‘*koselig*’ is frequently mentioned in the cabin representations in *Hyttetmagasinet*, and the fireplace also signifies the importance of this concept. People gather around the fireplace to be social and have a cozy time in the warmth of the fire. Candles share some of the same functions. The social life is also given much attention.

‘TV’ is also a recurrent word in the articles. One article argues that it is legitimate to watch the cup finals at the cabin: “The cup finals! It happens that your team makes the cut, and it is ok to watch it from the TV chair at the cabin. It is also okay to pass” (Nielsen 2013b:110). Some cabin owners have made a separate area for watching TV at their cabins: “Loft room: In the loft there is room for a small TV area for the family’s youth. A large skylight makes the room appear bigger” (Kalgraff 2013a:20). Other articles share tales of cabin owners who have made separate TV lounges: (1) “The loft

is spacious and open, with two large sleeping alcoves. Here, the two boys in the family have mentioned plans for a media room, while the father of the house wants an office” (Kalgraff 2013b:41); (2) “We are very happy to have a separate TV room of 13 m² with a door. Then those who want to can watch TV, while others can enjoy a book in the living room without being disturbed” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:67); and (3) “And the small TV room under the stairway is only called the ‘grandma-room’” (Bjurstrøm 2013:34). According to some articles, some owners have introduced the TV to their cabin bedroom: (1) “The bed is also nice to use on rainy days for some TV watching, Philippa (8) confides” (Hertzberg 2013:64); and (2) “Media bedroom: The flat screen hangs on the wall of this bedroom. Popular amongst youngsters who would like to relax a little bit with a DVD or two. Also nice on a rainy day” (Gleditsch 2013a:45). The Internet is however barely mentioned. Only one article in my research mentions this: “(The owner) has mobile Broadband, but he seldom works from the cabin. He feels it is important to distinguish between work and leisure” (Gleditsch 2013a:45). Since the 1960s, technology has advanced, and *Hyttemagasinet* is up to date and able to offer readers information of the latest technology:

Control the water pump from the TV!: The world continues to change, and before the tablet revolution is a fact, new functions keep popping up. The new Intesis Home function integrated in Panasonic Smart Viera TV allows you to control the home’s cooling and heating system from the television. You can start and stop the system, tweak the settings, and control the temperature of the whole house or each individual room (Berg 2013c:12).

The fact that the Internet is rarely mentioned in the representations of cabins and their owners is an interesting detail, especially because society in general welcomes iPads and smartphones with open arms. Taking a look on the other pages of *Hyttemagasinet*, however, there are recommendations for useful apps. This might indicate an implicit acknowledgement that it is against cabin etiquette to use a smartphone with the concession that people still find practical applications for new technology. However, to bring such technology into the cabin sphere may be understood as conflicting with the image of the cabin as a place that signifies a break with everyday life. The smartphone might be conceived as to go too far in terms of introducing modern ways of life, which prevent living in the present, i.e. the *koselig* atmosphere of the cabin.

The articles of *Hyttetmagasinet* also feature facilities that may be considered even more luxurious and unnecessary than iPhones. Tubs and saunas are typical, but even more luxurious amenities are mentioned, including a wine-cellar and a chandelier designed for Norwegian cabins: (1) "As the family has a burning passion for good wine, they had a small wine cellar built under the house. Here wine is kept for big occasions such as Christmas Eve, New Year's Eve, and Easter's Eve" (Hertzberg 2013:58); (2) "(The owner) wanted a TV lounge with a view over Skeikampen, a storeroom for skis, and a sauna" (Fossan 2014:19); (3) "Cabin chandelier: The chandelier 'Stetind' is hand-made and designed especially with Norwegian mountain cabins in mind" (Gleditsch 2014a:28); (4) "This was before the time of the Jacuzzi. Now it is preheated and waits for the Easter guests to take their first swim of the year. First into the ocean, then into the tub" (Østmoe 2014:44); (5) the owner "dreams of a sauna and a tub" (Gleditsch 2013a:47); and (6) "In total the cabin has four bedrooms downstairs, two in each end. They both have an adjacent bathroom, and at one end there is also a sauna" ("Drømmen fra A til Å" 2014:65).

The abovementioned facilities obviously contribute to a comfortable lifestyle. Through these measures, body temperature is constantly regulated. This is an interesting oppositional relation in this case of the 'spartan' as opposed to 'comfortable.' It is clear that what in *Bonytt* (1963) was the ideal of the 'spartan' is here replaced by the ideal of the 'comfortable.' Thus, one might question whether comfort is a way to reconceptualize the idea of the cabin as something different from 'home' in the city, and as a facility for outdoor activities. Unlike the cabin representations in *Bonytt* (1963), the cabin narrative in *Hyttetmagasinet* features comfort for minimal effort. This is a tale of luxury replacing the spartan and outdated. In summary, the articles of *Hyttetmagasinet* feature warm cabins with electricity and running water, TV, apps and Internet (computers, smartphones and iPads), bathtubs and saunas. I question whether this demonstrates new motives for spending time at the cabin in modernity. Additionally, as 'modern' appliances make it more convenient and comfortable to stay at the cabin, there is reason to believe that such luxury makes it more desirable to stay indoors.

3.3.4 Perfectionism and the ‘Achievement Generation’ (Generasjon Prestasjon)

Today’s young generation in Norway is often portrayed in the media as the achievement generation (*generasjon prestasjon*). This label points to a generation considered less rebellious than former generations, as young people feel an increased pressure to live up to the expectations of parents and others. This pressure is in part constructed by social media, and the image portrayed online is an important part of personal identity. Interior design is one important arena to perform and succeed. A similar concern for perfection and accomplishment is apparent in *Hyttemagasinet*, often seen in detail-oriented interior descriptions. There seems to be an underlying assumption that the cabin should be up to date on interior trends or at least have a consistent stylistic expression – while still looking like a cabin. Thus, there is a great focus on details and what is the ‘right’ interior. Some articles feature owners who are insecure about such decisions, and have thus chosen to hire an expert to avoid any mistakes. These texts suggest that consumer choices leave some cabin owners confused. In one article we meet a confused reader faced with the choice of which style to choose for her cabin bathroom: “My choice is between two directions: On the one hand, more traditional colors and an easy maintained bathroom (...) Or a more modern palette and a possibly more ‘impractical bathroom’ on the other hand, as I see images of new cabins today” (Lampe 2013b:94). Even cooking might be done ‘wrong’ and end in a complete disaster if not planned well:

Barbequing means waiting, and the social aspect of lighting up the barbeque and cooking should not be underrated. With a barbeque and good fresh ingredients the night is a guaranteed success. Or is it? Here are eight sure ways to scandal rather than success (Berg 2013a:7).

According to this account, not doing things right may provoke a scandal. Proper flooring might even be a good investment for one’s private economy and personal style:

The floor means a lot for the overall impression of an interior, and the ‘right’ floor can increase the market value. So to choose a floor of good quality can be a good investment. Nonetheless, it is of great importance in the hunt for a personal style that you are aware of what a floor does to a room’s atmosphere and character (“Kosekrok...” 2013:78).

Choosing the right flooring is however not an easy task according to this account:

A lot of owners plan their floor after the surroundings. If you have got a cabin by the sea you might want a bright wooden floor, and demand is high for driftwood colored parquets. In the mountains one might search for a more sheltered atmosphere, and darker floor with a warm glow. Cabin owners share a preference for rustic surfaces and lively floors with twig and soul (Berg 2013d:70).

According to one article, cabin owners may also end up in an argument with their hired experts on what is the right choice for their cabins. Here, a family confident of their own style got the last word in a disagreement with their experts:

The walls facing North and East are of foundation slabs from Steni. That it only became two walls with this solution is contrary to the opinions of (the) architect (...) and builder (...). We think that it is prettier than wood panel, (the owner) adds. We would not have chosen this solution for a cabin in the mountains, but the slabs are maintenance free and delivered in a variety of colors. The wooden panel is a material is more alive and in accordance with the family's own style ("Stolt Fyr!" 2014:52).

Again an personal sense of style is emphasized and expert's opinions are negotiated with the opinions of the cabin owners. The next paragraphs provide two examples of detail-oriented accounts of cabin interiors in *Hytttemagasinet*.

Case 1: "Basecamp Skeikampen"

In the article "Basecamp Skeikampen", a couple struggles to create the right atmosphere at their cabin with a hectic lifestyle: "Everything from cabinet solutions, to where to place the sockets, colors on the roof and walls, coziness, comfort and personality are, and have always been, important elements in the cabin. It only comes down to having the time and ability to create it" (Fossan 2014:19). Skiing should not be compromised: "(The owners) wanted a comfortable and nice base in the middle of the Norwegian ski trail network, without to spend either valuable skiing time or hectic days at work" (Fossan 2014:17). As a result they hired a supplier who could manage the project and make the right decisions: "It was difficult to combine hectic days at work with cabin planning and building where requirements for quality, finish and details were high" (Fossan 2014:17). The two owners had different visions for their cabin: "(Owner 1) dreamt of a light and bright atmosphere with simple interior. (Owner 2) wanted a TV lounge with a view over Skeikampen, a storeroom for ski preparation, and a sauna" (Fossan 2014:19); "I did not want logs and dark colors but I still wanted it to feel cabin-

like and cozy”, cabin owner 1 explains (Fossan 2014:20). Their hired expert presented the solution of pillows, before introducing the readers to the expert’s “pillow rules” (Fossan 2014:20). The expert also made some mood tableaux for the couple: “Beautiful candle barrels, sheepskin and pillows are a recipe for success when seeking coziness and a good atmosphere. (The expert) really has an eye for detail” (Fossan 2014:20). The expert also made sure to maintain a *koselig* atmosphere when (the expert) suggested a more modern yet home inspired look:

(The owner) wanted an open kitchen that allowed for good contact with guests and a short distance to the dining area. She originally imagined a white and modern solution, almost like home. Instead (the expert) suggested a simple profile with a weak patina of shadow, to create depth in the surfaces and to make the expression more cabin-like. The couple was very happy with the result. A massive countertop in pine gives it just the right amount of coziness (Fossan 2014:19).

In this case, interior design at the cabin is a detail-oriented process. This process contains a negotiation between different expressions *koselig* (roughness) and modern (perfection). In the table below we can observe that whilst cabin representations in *Bonytt* (1963) falls into the categories ‘roughness’ or ‘non-perfection’, the cabin representations in *Hyttemagasinet* are more on the other side of the opposition: ‘perfection’ or at least ‘non-roughness’ (Figure 11).

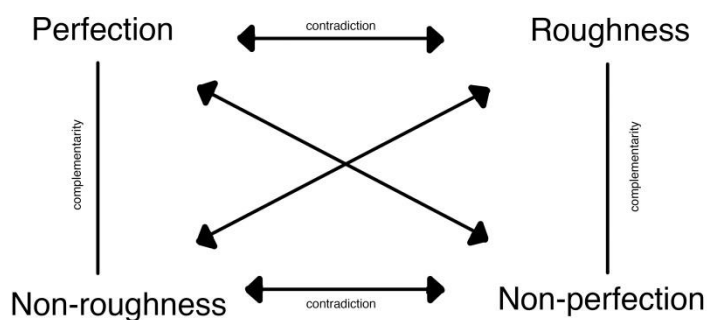


Figure 11: Semiotic square, perfection – roughness opposition.

Case 2:”The Dream from A to Z”

The article, “The Dream from A to Z,” features a couple who also struggle with creating the perfect cabin interior. According to this account, there are many details that should be considered when designing a cabin and choosing its interior:

It has been a lot to consider: especially the fireplace and kitchen. There is hardly anything you think about more in the planning process. And it might not be that strange, as the fireplace and kitchen are two very visible, important and costly elements at a cabin. The fireplace is in many ways the heart of the cabin. It functions as a gathering place, joy spreader and heater. The kitchen should be practical, big enough and nice. Choosing a fireplace takes some time. There is an eternity of opportunities, and, furthermore, many of them are still made by hand so there hardly exist any that looks exactly similar. And that is nice (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:61).

From the above statement we learn that the fireplace and kitchen are both places associated with heat and a cozy atmosphere. As previously mentioned, the fireplace is often associated with the *koselig*, and in this case we can see that the fireplace functions as the source of life at the cabin (the heart). Similarly, the kitchen functions as a gathering place. This account further explains that these elements are costly, and that one should make the right choice as there are many possibilities. The account further informs the reader that the couple found a kitchen supplier they liked. This was not a cheap choice, but the owners wanted “quality”, “style” and “practical solutions” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:61). Again one sees negotiation between different functions of the cabin including elements such as the practical, modern, stylish and cozy. What differs from the socio-economic context of *Bonytt*, however, is the excess of consumer choices combined with affluent consumers – which facilitates a mentality of renewal and detail-orientation²¹:

Well integrated with the dining room, the kitchen is delivered by Kistefos at Dokka. It is in solid white ‘narciss’ with crossbars in cupboards and glass doors and sugar cube list molding against the roof. The room itself is 60 cm deeper than the standard model of this cabin type from Tinderhytter. This has made room for more space for both cupboards and drawers, and especially the countertop. The worktop is in solid wood oak and stained in the color ‘Driftwood’ and oiled (...). The microwave and oven are built into the high cupboard next to an integrated refrigerator and freezer, according to directions from the kitchen supplier. The ventilators over the induction stove were decorated with Kistefos’s characteristic dragger in oak ahead of the installation. In addition to ample daylight from the windows, there are also tin spots lights in the roof and wall cabinets. Drawer and door handles

²¹ As information, Kistefos is an expensive brand that produces hand-made furniture.

are in antique tin. We have gotten a practical and spacious kitchen that is very well designed (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:63).

The planning process of the kitchen is detail-oriented. This is a tale of finding nothing less than the best products for the most important room of the cabin. The hallway is also planned in minute detail: “The hallway is covered in slate tiles, and it accommodates a wall-to-wall wardrobe and big merchant desk. The walls are painted with Lady Interior-stain in the color ‘Driftwood’” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:63). In addition to this stylish finish, “the room is decorated with many antiques gathered by the family through the years, things that mean a lot to us, and that set the right mood when you enter the cabin” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:63), and “the floor in the living room is white pine from Moelven treated with oiled hard wax” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:67). The bedrooms are also well furnished and in style with the rest of the cabin. Like the other rooms, the bedrooms feature the exclusive and expensive furniture from Kistefos:

In three of the four downstairs bedrooms there are family bunk beds from Kistefos in the colour ‘1140 sand.’ The cabin’s wardrobes were custom made by Kistefos. In the loft we added a wall and door so as to make about 2/3 of the space a cozy extra bedroom with two custom beds by Kistefos. (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:65).

This account paints a complicated picture of designing a cabin. The owners to make practical choices and they also have to consider the overall expression, color palette, forms and quality. In the end they also found the right fireplace:

The fireplace is built in normal Norwegian grey stone – or *råkopp* as is called in the builder terminology. It is bricked with concrete grout, and not stacked dry. The fireplace cape is bricked with bricks to avoid cracks in the wall. It is plastered in regular brick and plaster and brushed/sponge-washed to achieve the wanted structure. Ahead for the cape it is integrated a solid wooden stick that is stained in the same colour as the wall panel in the living room. The main fireplace consists of a component from Dovre, model 2200. The fireplace is not too towering, but a natural centerpiece in the living room. A fireplace one can admire from the dining room as well as the sofa corner (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:67).

In short, the account above tells a story of planning a cabin that demands great competence, financial resources and work.

Social anthropologist Marianne Gullestad characterises Norwegian people as “home-centered” (Gullestad 1992:64). The home has rich meanings to Norwegians: Norwegians use the home to create and express their specific ideas of identity and intimacy. The home thus signifies, produces, and justifies a complex set of cultural categories, values and relations. Homes are allegories for Norwegians to express themselves in terms of gender, family, classes and other social identities (Gullestad 1992:64). Yet, as Witoszek argues, Norwegians are also a tribe of nature (“*naturstamme*”) (Witoszek 1998:14). How can Norwegians be a home-centered tribe of nature in modern society? Moreover, the cabin building as represented in *Hyttemagasinet* is much like a normal modern home, and it is important to ask whether the cabin has become an extension of the modern arena of consumption, identity formation, and status construction. The detail-oriented perspective in the above cases may imply that details win a significant portion of people’s attention. If this is the case then there is reason to believe that other aspects of cabin life are given less attention. The invasion of the modern at cabins invites urban (central) sets of categories of social belonging, class identity, and intimacy. Further study into what is being lost in this process would be valuable.

3.3.5 Bringing Nature Indoors

The opposition between home-centeredness and nature-centeredness is overcome by a tendency to focus on bringing nature indoors. *Hyttemagasinet* shows that this reconciliation can be observed both in reference to architecture and interior design. Important to the former is the size of windows and how they allow natural daylight and the outdoor nature to enter the indoor atmosphere. In addition, the shape, look (natural woodwork) and placement of the building in the terrain, including varying the indoor ground surface level, are used as a means to bring the landscape indoors. Six of the cabin representations specifically mention architecture as a strategy to bring nature indoors. Cabin 1 brings nature indoors through its great windows and variations in the ground levels: “In one with nature: When the living room is lowered below ground-level it feels like the nature outside almost becomes part of the decoration; (...)” “In periods where you are regularly indoors, especially in a winter cabin, it is important that you can experience different climate zones”; “The living room at the lower floor is lowered down in comparison with the dining room, and here nature flows in through the

great windows” (Henriksen 2014:32-36). This is explained further in the following sentence: “It was done to come closer to nature outside. The difference in level of the roofs makes a separate landscape inside, and one experiences the nature outside in different ways” (Henriksen 2014:32-36). “The most time is spent in the common room at the ground floor, where kitchen and dining room are bathed in impressions of nature” (Henriksen 2014:36). In cabin 2 high ceilings invite nature indoors: “With about 4,30 meters up to the roof at the highest, and windows on two floors, it almost creates a cathedral atmosphere when outside nature almost crawls all the way inside to you” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:60). The same method is used in case 3: “With the 180 degree view we have at Ølneseter, a roof height at 4,30 and many windows, nature comes right inside to you in the living room” (“Drømmen fra A til Å” 2014:67). Article 4 emphasizes the scenery: “At this cabin, the owners can enjoy outdoor living and the surroundings from the time they wake up until they go to bed, the whole time with a beautiful nature scenery in front of them” (...) “The thought is that the social rooms shall open up towards nature” (Kalgraff 2013a:18). Cabin 5 is smaller, but also utilizes the scenery: “The windows reach from floor to ceiling, and the shower has a view straight out in nature” (Raanes and Sørensen 2013:65). Cabin 6 also makes good use of its great windows: “Big windows welcome nature indoors,” and: “Close to nature: Big windows allow for nature to come indoors” (Sindre 2013:67). The owners of cabin assure us that it is “the perfect summerhouse that lets nature in through the great sliding doors and gives protection with embedded sunshades” (“Boder, Skur...” 2013:59).

Contemplating interior design, the articles frequently mention natural colors on textiles and furniture, as well as animal and plant motifs, as good choices for a cabin interior. One article assures the reader that one can bring plants indoors: “There is no need to wait with nice green signs of spring until nature itself takes action” (...) “The hazel comes early and blooms in nature in March/April, but you can take them in earlier” (Berg 2014b:90). Another article suggests choosing bird motifs: “But if you enjoy observing nature outside the cabin walls, you can also bring the birds indoors” (Berg 2014a:12); “Animal and nature prints have long been an interior trend, be it owl-pillows or tree-hooks. And there is still much nice to discover” (Gleditsch 2013b:30). Despite the more stylish and polished surfaces at the cabins in *Hyttemagasinet*, natural materials are still considered a safe choice at cabins: “It was important for us to switch strong textile and furniture colors with softer nature colors” (Hertzberg 2013:60). There is also

a tale of creating harmony between the outdoors and indoors through natural colors: “The colors are also ‘right’ considering the surrounding nature” (Lampe 2014:72). Another article addresses that natural materials can also be used outside the cabin walls: “Natural materials are well suited to cabins, but they are also a general trend” (Lampe 2013a:47).

The above quotes show a general focus on bringing nature indoors. Moreover, in *Bonytt* from the 1960s there was also a focus on natural colors and textiles, and a ‘rule’ of cabin interior that it should look natural and match the surroundings. Yet, in *Hyttemagasinet*, this is brought to a new level, especially concerning architecture. There might be several reasons for this. The first is very obvious. Nature is appreciated, and people are taking advantage of the fact that it is less expensive and easier to make large windows and cabins today than it was in the 60s. In *Hyttemagasinet* most cabins are well insulated and heated, and there is reason to believe that they have also invested in double layered windows. If not, electric heating can compensate for thin windows. In addition, these accounts mention that the cabin owners have hired architects, but this was also the case for many cabins in *Bonytt*. People might also give this amount of attention to architecture to justify staying indoors in warmer and more comfortable conditions. The contrast then between the two accounts of nature and interiors in *Bonytt* and *Hyttemagasinet* is that instead of noting how the cabin should be adjusted to nature (*Bonytt*), nature should be able to enter your cabin (*Hyttemagasinet*). The two magazines convey two distinct narratives. The focus has changed from being outdoors studying the cabin and how it fits in the terrain to being indoors looking outdoors at the landscape.

3.3.6 The ‘Ideal’ Cabin According to Cabin Representations in *Hyttemagasinet* 2013-2014

Let us now imagine a typical cabin as represented in *Hyttemagasinet*. It is Easter and we are visiting Kari and Ola Nordmann at their cabin. They inherited the original cabin from Kari’s grandparents, but had it torn down and built a new cabin 10 years ago. As we enter the cabin we smell newly baked waffles. We enter a small hallway with heated flooring. Here we hang our jackets on a stylish rack before we enter the main room. This is a studio inspired combination of a well-equipped and large kitchen, a dining area and a living room. To get to the living room part of the floor we have to walk down two

steps as the ground level is designed in accordance with the outdoor landscape. This room has large windows and you feel a sense of being outdoors while inside. You are invited to take a seat in a chair by the fireplace, a warm and comfortable place to sit. In the evening the cabin owners exercise on the nearest cross country trails. When they get home, Ola waxes the skis in his ski preparation room while Kari prepares the supper. This evening the children are keeping themselves busy in the TV room, although they usually enjoy card games or other activities.

As has been demonstrated, there are five main tendencies in the cabin representations of *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014): (1) the cabins are large. Older cabins are often either expanded or torn down to rebuild on the same plot. The ability to host guests was mentioned as a key motivation for expanding; (2) there is also a tendency toward constant renewal (consumption); (3) the cabin should be comfortable, and preferably have a good heating system, entertainment and luxury facilities such as a tub or sauna; (4) as a result of the need of comfort, people strive for perfect detail-oriented interiors; and (5) one brings nature indoors. Central concepts of this mythos include an orientation towards centralized markets, trends, social media etc. (not local), large (not small), modern (not anti-modern), new (not old), warm (not cold), comfort (not spartan), perfection (not simple) and the indoors (not outdoors).

3.4 Conclusions

This chapter has attempted to demonstrate that representations of cabin buildings are different in *Bonytt* (1963) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014), and that these representations are part of an evolution of cultural and socioeconomic contexts in Norway. Table 2 maps out the main oppositions in these magazines. What is the role of nature in the text studied in this chapter? It is clear that the cabin as a building is represented remarkably differently in *Bonytt* (1963) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014). The preference for: small has become large; simplicity has become luxury, almost anything ‘old’ has been replaced with something ‘new’ and comfort replaces the spartan. With this abundance comes the goal of perfection and the outdoors is brought indoors. An additional observation made in this analysis is that as the cabin has become a social arena, which brings up connotations to ‘home’ in the city and might reflect broader cosmopolitan developments of Norwegian culture since the 1960s. The cabin

was in *Bonytt* also a place for personal relations, yet it was mostly a place for family. Despite the contrasting findings of this chapter, the idea behind the cabin: a home away from the actual ‘home’ in the city which brings us closer to nature and our own sense of belonging, is still much the same in both time frames. The way nature is portrayed, however, differs. What in the 1960s were only visions of future development have now been realized, and with modern lifestyle comes a new set of categories for understanding the landscape. The contrast then between the two accounts of nature and interiors in *Bonytt* and *Hyttemagasinet* is that instead adjusting the cabin to nature (*Bonytt*), nature now enters the cabin (*Hyttemagasinet*). The two magazines offer two distinct narratives: The focus has changed from being outdoors critically studying the cabin and how it fits in the terrain to being indoors looking out at the landscape. Chapter four will expand on this subject matter.

Table 2: Key oppositions in *Bonytt* (1963) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014)

<i>Bonytt</i> 1963	<i>Hyttemagasinet</i> 2013-14
Local	Central
Small	Large
Traditional with components of the modern	Modern with components of tradition, but not the anti-modern (outdated/old)
Old	New
Cold	Warm
Spartan/ simple	Comfortable
Simple/ roughness	Perfection
Outdoors	Indoors

4 Representations of Cabin Experiences

4.1 Introduction

While the previous chapter examined descriptions of cabin buildings, in this chapter I wish to elaborate on representations of outdoor experiences and nature in Norwegian magazines from the 1960s and today (2013-2014). The objective of the chapter is to identify different categories for understanding nature in these sources. This chapter aims to answer three sub-questions: First, which tendencies associated with activities and outdoor life can be observed in cabin representations in Norwegian magazines from the 1960s and 2013-2014, and how are these narrated? Second, what are the implicit meanings of nature experience as represented by the journals? Third, what do these respective sets of representations tell us about the past and current values and aspirations of Norwegian society?

The chapter addresses these questions by first presenting a theoretical framework for understanding the concept of ‘dwelling’ in modernity: The Dwelling Perspective. In this chapter I join semiotics with Tim Ingold’s phenomenology of landscape (Ingold 2011). Second, this framework is applied in a semiotic analysis of activities in cabin representations. These representations are read as signifiers of understandings of nature. The third and final part of this chapter attempts to draw a generic picture of the cabin in contemporary Norway based on the findings of the previous section. My analysis suggests that the way nature is represented is significantly different in the studied media from the 1960s and today (2013-2014). My analysis is however at the ‘meta’ level, studying accounts ‘engineered’ not by cabin owners (my informants) but by journalists. A myth can be believed in as long as it repeated enough to the ‘right’ audience, and in this way the represented accounts are as myth preserving as they are myth making. It will be argued that the cabin narratives studied indicate a changing mentality toward ‘nature’ as part of the cabin experience. I therefore suggest a relation- and task-oriented re-conceptualization of the cabin in modern Norway.

4.2 Tim Ingold and the ‘Dwelling Perspective’: Landscape and ‘Taskscape’ in the Cabin Semiosphere

The theoretical framework of this thesis, the Dwelling Perspective, comes from the social anthropologist Tim Ingold (Ingold 2011). This chapter adopts his framework in a semiotic analysis of activities in cabin representations. Moreover, the Dwelling Perspective challenges the fundamental mythos of the ‘commodity perspective’, a Cartesian duality between mind and matter. Usually associated with neo-classical economics, this idea facilitates understandings of the human as relating to two separate platforms: the natural (biological nature, body) and the artificial (civilization, mind). Ingold deems this paradigm problematic. In order to conceptually separate culture and nature one must claim to stand outside nature whereas our relations to nature takes place in an environment of which we are part. The world can only unfold to us through bodily experience, which is a prerequisite for human existence, and so there is no sense in attempting to understand the mind outside the context of bodily experience. According to the Dwelling Perspective, humans engage in the world rather than being detached from it. Here, living in the world is synonymous with experience, with experience meaning relations between persons in an environment. Personhood is understood in what is often associated with native narratives as a state “in which the self is seen to inhere in the unfolding of the relations set up by virtue of its positioning in an environment” (Ingold 2011:11). In other words, this definition of personhood is not limited to humans. Together with other persons in the environment, humans act in what Ingold calls the taskscape. The Dwelling Perspective understands activity in terms of tasks, which create taskscapes. A taskscape is defined as “the totality of tasks making up the pattern of activity of a community” (Ingold 2011:325). Moreover, the Dwelling Perspective adopts the task-oriented understanding of a landscape as the embodied form of a taskscape. The landscape must not be confused with more substantial concepts such as ‘land,’ ‘nature,’ and ‘space’ (Ingold 2011:190). Unlike these concepts, ‘landscape’ is “qualitative and heterogeneous” and cannot be observed as ‘scenery’ (Ingold 2011:190). As a result, Ingold argues that the landscape is “a pattern of activities ‘collapsed’ into an array of features” (Ingold 2011:198). In other words, taskscapes consist of activities (socially constructed), and the landscape is constructed of the embodiment of relations (features). In this way, the landscape is an unending in-process embodiment of past,

current and future activities: “the landscape is never complete: neither ‘built’ nor ‘unbuilt’, it is perpetually under construction” (Ingold 2011:199).

Yet, the commodity perspective seems to dominate in Western society. One example from *Bonytt* (1963) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014) is the tendency to refer to the landscape as scenery (see chapter 3). Ingold argues that this understanding of the landscape as something to be observed is problematic:

I reject the division between inner and outer worlds – respectively of mind and matter, meaning and substance – upon which such distinction rests. The landscape, I hold, is not a picture in the imagination, surveyed by the mind’s eye; nor however is it an alien and formless substance awaiting the imposition of human order. ‘The idea of landscape’, as Meinig writes, ‘runs counter to recognition of any simple binary relationship between man and nature’ (Meinig 1979). Thus, neither is the landscape identical to nature, nor is it on the side of humanity against nature. As the familiar domain of our dwelling, it is *with* us, not *against* us, but it is no less real for that. And through living in it, the landscape becomes a part of us, just as we are a part of it. In a world constructed as nature, every object is a self-contained entity, interacting with others through some kind of external contact. But in a landscape, each component enfolds within its essence the totality of its relations with each and every other. (Ingold 2011:191)

According to this explanation, we relate to nature by participating in a landscape, and these relations form the ecosystem itself. Ingold’s figure (Figure 12) situates the perception of time, activity, production, and exchange within the dwelling and commodity perspectives:

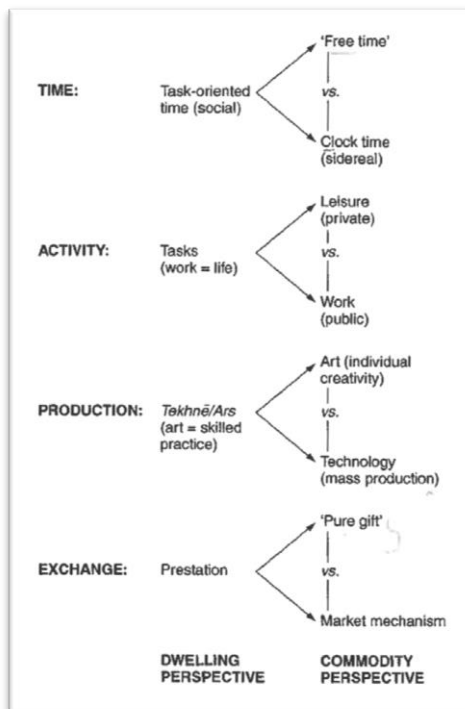


Figure 12: Ingold's Figure – time, activity, production and exchange in the dwelling perspective and the commodity perspective – source: (Ingold 2011:329).

As Figure 12 illustrates, the distinction between work and leisure is different in the two representations. According to a commodity perspective, work-time and free-time are categorized as total opposites. Free time is therefore regarded as the time when the worker becomes an individual consumer (*right column*). According to the Dwelling Perspective, however, work is synonymous with life in the form of tasks (*left column*). Consequentially, understandings of time and the landscape are inherently task-oriented. Furthermore, according to a commodity perspective, during free time we turn inwards and play out the role of an individual consumer:

Free time is when we experience (or rather, think we experience) when we *turn inwards on ourselves* in the hedonistic pursuit of purely *individual* satisfactions: it is the time of that archetypal creature of neoclassical economics, the *isolated consumer*. In reality, of course, this creature is a figment of the imagination, for no-one consumes in isolation. For the same reason, *free time* is not so much something we actually experience as a category by which our experience is discursively represented, in contexts where we wish to draw attention to the space of our own private and subjective selfhood as against the regulative structures of public life whose temporality is epitomized by the clock (Ingold 2011:329, my italics).

As emphasized in the passage above, the expression of identity takes place during free time through consuming in a vacuum freed from the regulatory structures of society. The Dwelling Perspective, however, focuses not merely on turning outwards. As already mentioned, the self is best understood as acting in greater taskscape by attending to other persons. It is a “person-centered” understanding of environment as a whole (Ingold 2011:328).

Taskscapes, Landscapes and the Cabin Semiosphere

The Dwelling Perspective offers an alternative toolkit to interpret the ‘book of signs’ of cabin media as symbols of understandings of the landscape. Moreover, as nature is inherent in the landscapes where we dwell, in cabin media such relations are represented. Thus, the aim of this chapter is to systematize tendencies in these texts and to read them as signs of different ways to dwell in the landscape. This includes how time is oriented, what receives attention, what kinds of activities are mentioned, where they take place, and which understandings of the world and nature these representations signify. Inherent in this study is a deeper question of how the transformation of Norwegian cabin culture might reflect changes in Norwegian mentality.

This is also an attempt to study the material agency of the cabin. Material agency is here understood not as ‘scripts’ but, as Ingold defines embodiment in general, as “a movement of incorporation rather than inscription, not a transcribing of form onto material but a movement wherein forms themselves are generated” (Ingold 2011:193). Following these guidelines, form is not privileged over process, as the process itself is embodied in the form. Without going too far in the descriptions of the process itself, this thesis adopts a broad reading of material agency as a constant process of movement and incorporation in a taskscape. In other words, how the transition from the small, simple and practical cabins in the 1960s to the large, comfortable cabins of today – often oriented towards renewal and perfectionistic ideas (see chapter 3) – influence the way in which people dwell at cabins. It is however important to note that the point of this analysis is not to limit the cabin to a separate place of dwelling as a contrast to commodity living at ‘home’ in the cities. On the contrary, dwelling is understood as the “primary condition of our being at home in the world” (Ingold 2011:333):

But the move from left to right does not represent an evolutionary transition from tradition to modernity. The dwelling perspective has not been replaced by the commodity perspective. Indeed the whole thrust of my argument is to the contrary – namely that task orientation, with its attendant socially situated skills and presentations, is the *primary condition* of our being at home in the world. As such, it constitutes the baseline of sociality upon which the order of modernity has been built, and from which we have now come to terms with it (Ingold 2011:333, my italics).

It is possible, therefore, to argue for an evolutionary progression, from a traditional state of affairs in which work is inseparable from life, and characterized by task-orientation with its attendant socially situated skills and prestations, to a modern condition in which every aspect of human life is split by a master dichotomy between freedom and necessity (...) I propose here to argue to the contrary. I do not believe that task-orientation has disappeared with the transition to industry: it persists, perhaps especially in those contexts in which we claim to be ‘at home’. (Ingold 2011:330)

Thus, cabin representations are understood in terms of a constant negotiation between the dwelling and commodity perspectives. What is more, the cabin represents an interesting place of mediation between the two perspectives, as it, like ‘home’ in the city, is a place of familiar relations and attachment to the local.

Home may represent a certain perspective of the world, which I have called the perspective of dwelling. Its focus is on the process whereby features of the environment take on specific local meanings through their incorporation into the pattern of everyday activity of its inhabitants. Home in this sense, is that zone of familiarity, which people know intimately, and in which they, too, are intimately known (Ingold 2011:330).

In the case of cabins, the understanding of what is local and familiar tends in some degree to incorporate the wider environment ‘surrounding’ the cabin. As an example, since much activity is done outdoors, one might extend relations to the paths around the cabin, the near-by fishing pond or surrounding forests. These relations also extend to the animals, trees and rocks that form part of the landscape. What also makes the cabin an interesting place to study is the fact that it represents the opposite of work time, i.e. free time from a commodity perspective. In other words, the cabin also signifies the time and space of individualistic consumption. This framework also highlights problematic aspects of studying cabin-related articles in the media as the media is today more than

ever influenced by global market forces, and the media can no longer be studied without recognizing its role as both a product of and communicator of the global market.

In short, within this framework there are three interconnected, yet competing, messages related to cabins: (1) A commodity perspective idea that when one is not at work, ‘free time’ is spent as an individual consumer; (2) according to a dwelling perspective we focus on relations and tasks and experience the landscape accordingly; and (3) the inherent idea of work-related structures (e.g. clock time) in commodity society that influence the cabin market and from which we cannot part even at our cabins. At the cabin these three perspectives are constantly negotiated. Furthermore, one can argue that life at the cabin is related to two key aspects of industrial society: (1) our understanding of the world and our part in it (world-view) and (2) our capacity to change the way we think and act in our environment (skill). The next part of this chapter will apply this framework in a semiotic analysis of representations of nature experiences in selected Norwegian media sources.

4.3 Cabin Representations: Experiences and Life Outdoors

This part of the chapter identifies patterns of experiences in representations of cabin. This analysis will give special attention to activity, feelings, opinions, associations, routines, etc. These findings will be studied in the context of the opposition indoors vs outdoors. An obvious limitation of this objective is the fact that mapping specific tasks and taskscapes is not possible, as no relations can be studied in a vacuum. Yet, in the following sections is an attempt to systematize information about experiences through simplification in order to consider the findings semiotically as representations of wider cultural mind-sets. For clarity it is first necessary to attain to some of the deeper meanings of the opposition between indoors and outdoors.

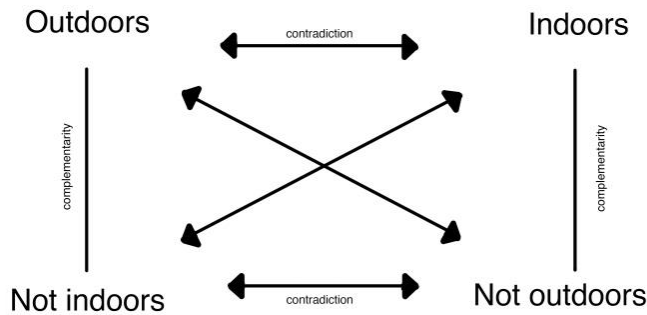


Figure 13: Semiotic square, indoors – outdoors opposition.

If we apply Chandler’s description of the semiotic square to the concepts indoors and outdoors, the upper corners of the square represent an opposition between the two (see Figure 13). The lower corners represent two positions, which are not accounted for in simple binary oppositions: Not outside and not inside. The horizontal relationships represent an opposition between each of the left-hand terms (Inside and not outside) and its paired right-hand term (not indoors and outdoors). The terms at the top (indoors and outdoors) represent ‘presences,’ while their companion terms (not indoors and not outdoors) represent ‘absences’(Chandler 2007:107, my replacements²²). Being inside and not being outside are complimentary phenomena. Whilst being indoors and being outdoors are oppositional concepts, similarly not being indoors and not being outdoors are in most cases contradictions. There might however be context-specific exceptions to this opposition where it is unclear what belong to each of the two categories (for example if someone is on a veranda with a roof and it is disputed whether the veranda is outdoors or indoors). In general, however, the semiotic square makes the relations between oppositional concepts clearer.

4.3.1 The 1960s

Almost no activities were mentioned in *Bonytt*. Instead it provides information about the cabin structures. Considering the findings presented in the next paragraphs, I suggest that such activities were not featured because they were taken for granted and might have taken up too much space. My findings from other media indicate that the cabin is

²² My replacements: S1 (indoors), S2 (outdoors), not S1 (not indoors) and not S2 (not outdoors). If we invest these signs with meaning it appears that “contrariety or opposition (Indoors/Outdoors); complementarity or implication (Indoors/Not outdoors and Outdoors/Not indoors); and contradiction (Indoors/Not indoors and outdoors/Not outdoors) (Chandler 2007:107, my replacements).

associated with a certain lifestyle and this lifestyle could be implied. Consequently, this analysis explores *A-magasinet* from 1964-1967. From a larger dataset (*A-magasinet* from 1964 to 1969 that responded on the words *hytte* and *hytta* in the online archive), I have chosen six articles that I found representative as they narrate life at cabins from cabin owners' 'own' perspective, and offer some kind of description of how they live at the cabin. In the following representations there was a general tendency to consider indoor life as uncomfortable. The next sections demonstrate that this lack of comfort indoors encouraged an understanding of the cabin as part of a taskscape.

Article 1: Cabin Easter

The first article describes different types of Easter holidays including cabin Easter, hotel Easter and Mediterranean (*Syden*) Easter. In the description of cabin Easter one may recognize several of the traits already identified in the previous chapter. The representation of cabin Easter provides a description of experiences and relations narrated in between two opposite categories of space outdoors and indoors.

Cabin Easter – It smells of resin and soft sticky wax for skis, of freshly made coffee and gently burnt bacon. One travels with the national railway to the mountains, sitting in a crowded compartment with transistor radio and seductive jazz-rhythms. But instead of annoyance from nagging and noise one feels joy from the communality. At the station, Ola Uppigården with Blakken [typical Norwegian illustrative names for a farmer and his horse] awaits. He takes the luggage while one skis to the cabin or one can ski holding a line attached to the weasel truck. The farmer has already heated the *seter* – the wood stove is crackling. The good old Easter mood is there in no time (Rie 1964).

Here one might observe four main patterns. The first is a genuine optimistic attitude, a feeling of positivity: They are joyful despite the chaotic conditions. Second, this joy is connected to a feeling of community as they relate to other tourists and the local farmer. Third, this image is not complete without an addition of physical activity. In this case the physical activity mentioned is skiing. The tourists are skiing whilst the local farmer run errands for them. The farmer has also heated the *seter*. The fourth observation is that indoor life is associated with heat and *kos* (cosiness) in contrast to the cold outdoors. As previously mentioned, *kos* (or *koselig*) is a very important concept of Norwegian culture. This indoors climate seems to contribute to the right Easter mood.

Cabin Easter has detective novels and wind-up gramophone. The records are worn-out, but “Night and Day,” “Moonlight Serenade,” and “Tango Sjalusi” endure this year too. Of course there is work: water shall be carried from the stream, or snow melted for the dishwashing. The wood stove is intractable, and later in the week there are only meat-balls and seal-cakes every other day. (Rie 1964)

This information is already depicting a taskscape. According to the above statement, the cabin tourists read detective literature and listen to the gramophone. It is apparent that this entertainment is different from home. The records are worn out yet still good and might recall memories from times listening long ago. In Norway, detective novels are associated with Easter holidays and the cabin, so reading these books might represent tradition and contribute to indicate that the cabin is a place different from home. Like the findings presented in the previous chapter, we can also in this account see clear signs of optimism, a ‘we take what we have and make the best out of it’ mentality. Moreover, worn down records and an intractable stove are portrayed as challenges rather than problems. This means that these challenges are not necessarily viewed as a negative thing, but rather that they contribute to simple living. The account above also mentions hard work, specifically carrying water. It is interesting to note that this activity is understood to bring the cabin tourists closer to nature: “Yet at the cabin one feels in harmony with nature as never before. And carrying water is forgotten when one afterwards can enjoy a beer, frothing and golden in the glass. Then it is good to be a cabin-person” (Rie 1964). Nevertheless, how or why such relations to nature take place is not explicitly mentioned. Reading between the lines, carrying water seems to be what causes this connection as nature is often associated with the outdoors and carrying water is the only activity (apart from skiing) that is specifically mentioned as taking place outdoors. That means outdoors life is portrayed as synonymous with work and physical activity, and one might read out of this that the landscape is experienced as taskscape and that participating in this taskscape creates a harmony with nature. The indoors is on the other hand depicted as a relaxing and warm environment which is interesting as the indoors is usually considered spartan and not comfortable in the other media representations from the 60s. Another interesting aspect of this article is the concept of the ‘cabin-person,’ which is used in connection with leaving the city at Easter. This might indicate that if one chooses a cabin holiday instead of holiday in the city, at a hotel or in the Mediterranean, one might be considered a cabin-person. This finding might be linked to a greater tendency to constantly negotiate what should be given

priority. By investing in a cabin, the owners have chosen to stay there in holidays (unless they can also afford to also go elsewhere) and considering oneself a cabin-person might be a way to identify with the choice and adjust oneself accordingly. Cabins in *Bonytt* (1963) without insulation are labeled ‘summer cabins’, rather than ‘winter-cabins’ without insulation. A person choosing to spend time or invest in a cabin is labeled a cabin-person and enjoys this identity instead of travelling to Mediterranean countries. Furthermore, this identification may also symbolize an attachment to the place which goes deeper than investment – a familiarity with the local environment as a taskscape full of memories of bygone days at the cabin shared with family, locals, and nature. With this description an image is starting to appear: The cabin is a place to dwell in the landscape, a place where the landscape and time is task-oriented. These relations create a feeling of harmony with nature. Simultaneously, it is a place where citizens from the city are treated well by locals and can relax at a quiet place far away from chaotic city life.

Article 2: The Hike to the Cabin

The second article only has one direct reference to private cabins. The content is however of interest as it describes a well-known phenomenon in 1960s cabin culture: The trip to the cabin. Published in October, this article features hikers the author has met in the forest. “Five young schoolgirls from Bærum biked to their cabin ‘Kvitut’ (...). It is handy to have a bike, they argued. Soon we’ll be going downhill, and furthermore it is cheap, and we save the bus money! Nice youth, isn’t it?” (Finstad 1964:11). According to this account, the interviewed youth have made a choice based on what is practical and cheap, and seem optimistic and confident in their choice as the path will soon go downhill and movement will get easier. Again there is a tendency to take what one has got (in this case a bike) and make the best out of it. The youth make an effort and are rewarded with an experience and the status of being ‘lovely Norwegian youth.’ As mentioned in chapter two, living outdoors, physical effort, and primitive living are often idealized in Norwegian culture. In addition, these young people do not seem have an aversion to going outdoors, what is in Norway referred to as the doorstep mile (*dørstokkmila*). They have done their duty as good Norwegian youth. This image recurs in another interview featured in the same article:

Or what should be said about today's Oslo girls (...) who suddenly arrive rushing out of the woods explaining that they have hiked from Sundvollen. Not by using the tramway up Krokkleiva, but by following the map, ending up at Guriby, tired and exhausted. But they had a fun journey!" (Finstad 1964:11)

This account also glorifies the optimistic efforts of youth to travel on their own by bike or foot in the forest. On this journey they invest time and energy, and gain a positive experience. They experience the environment and sense nature differently than they would if they were taking the bus. Inherent in this experience is a connection between the task (biking, hiking) and the qualities of time, location and distance. The cabin might seem further away or closer, all depending on how they experience the trip. And, they meet a standing ovation from the reporter and probably also other people at home when they have behaved like true 'Norwegians.'

Article 3: "My Norwegian Holiday Paradise"

The same type of ovation is given the adults resisting seductive advertisements for exotic Mediterranean destinations. In the article "My Norwegian Holiday Paradise," we are introduced to the cabin 'realities' of four Norwegian cabin owners. The introduction of the article starts with praising the noble dedication to Norwegian summers.

There are still Norwegians *true to Norwegian summers* - Norwegians that are not seduced by enticing ads of sunshine day out and day in, and nights soft as velvet under the palms. People that obstinately resist exotic food and cheap wine, and instead rejoice in God's beautiful nature (in Norway!), and fish and hike by foot in their Norwegian holiday paradise. And let us honor them for that! (Rie 1965)

The text indicates that it is considered 'noble' to stay in Norway in the summertime. Moreover, it becomes apparent that this is considered noble as Norwegian summers can be cold and wet and demand more effort than travelling to Mediterranean countries. One can observe that staying in Norway for summers is considered a nod to the Norwegian national nature tradition. By staying, the owners show that – even given the choice of exotic holiday locations – they prefer their cabin in a Norwegian fjord with simple food and at times bad weather. One would believe that any living being far north of the equator should crave sunshine desperately. Still, this account informs us that these noble people make a pietistic sacrifice and resist all of this to be in God's nature. However,

the wording of this article suggests that the author would not necessarily have done the same. Still, Norwegian summers are portrayed as an idyllic alternative to exotic destinations.

For the first cabin owners featured in this article, the cabin is their summer paradise. “For me the summer is in Norway (...). We have an islet all to ourselves named Liaholmen and it is nothing less than magnificent” (Rie 1965). The author refers to the “hopeless weather”, but the owners express optimism: “We live in hope that it will get better next year” (Rie 1965).

I love sun, (...) but even when the weather is bad everything is not ruined. One might go for a walk around the island and go fishing with a lure. Collect blue mussels and cook a mussel soup. Or catch enough small fish to boil bouillabaisse. One can just go for a stroll and be lazy, pick flowers, eat nice food and drink good wine (Rie 1965).

The cabin is portrayed as a place with endless opportunities for activity. The landscape is perceived as a field of potential activities. Furthermore, the above allegory is a tale of slow living. This is a seductive account of quality time with family in nature. It is also a tale of returning to what might be perceived as a true version of oneself by doing tasks that are associated with previous trips to the cabin and perhaps dear memories. When the author suggests that “the wine is cheaper in sun filled countries”, the answer he gets from the cabin owner challenges a neo-classical image of the rational individual consumer “if one drinks a little less, the cost is the same” (Rie 1965). As elaborated in chapter 2, a pietistic, frugal mentality characterizes the ‘good Norwegian.’ Furthermore, the words in this account indicate that the owners are happy with their life at the cabin and do therefore not need to visit foreign countries. What is more, the owners seem skeptical about going elsewhere:

It sounds great to have a whole islet for oneself (...). It is nothing less than an adventure. We had another place earlier where my husband grew roses. He is crazy about roses. I cannot stand sand, and why should I then fight for half a meter beach space when I could have my own islet to myself at the shore (Rie 1965).

In the account above, holidays abroad are associated with struggle. Having an islet for oneself is on the other hand an adventure. On their own islet they enjoy peace and quiet from other people in a familiar environment: “here we are totally sheltered and the

holiday is pure recreation” (Rie 1965). As argued in chapter two, the words peace (*fred*), calm/quiet (*ro*) and quiet (*stillhet*) are concepts that hold rich meanings in Norwegian culture, and may refer to the absence of conflict (within family, between colleagues, neighbours or friends), social contact (yet, immediate family and friends are often exceptions) and noise (Gullestad 1992:141,153). This is based on a concept of distance as a guarding principle, to avoid “a fragmentation of the self” (Gullestad 1992:159). Going back to the private islet then, the peace and quiet are associated with good relations to oneself, family and friends and nature.

The second cabin represented in this article is also located close to the shore. The lady of the house describes the building process: “My husband had a craftsman to help with the structure and electrical installation, but the rest we have done ourselves” (Rie 1965). To a question of what has been her main effort in the process the owner replies:

I am an expert in pulling out old nails. Furthermore, I am an assistant and take charge of tidying up. I think one enjoys things more when you make an effort. One creates personal relations to the things. My husband and I also like to have something to do (Rie 1965).

This statement suggests that the owners form bonds to the landscape through activities and relations. In other words, the article represents the landscape as an embodied taskscape. Furthermore, the article gives the impression that the owners spend a lot of time outdoors: “The tiles at the terrace are natural stone that is found along the beaches – we live outdoors when weather allows for it” (Rie 1965). Here we see that the owners also utilized the local environment in the construction of their cabin. The journalist seems to prefer direct questions: “Is it not boring to stay at the same place every summer?” (Rie 1965). To this question one of the owners replies that they are not bored at their cabin:

We do travel despite owning a cabin. ‘Bentebo’ [name of the cabin] is a whole-year place that we use from the first weekend after Easter until the first snow arrives. Furthermore we live here constantly during school holidays, and my husband and I travel back and forth to work. It is only an hour’s drive from Oslo, and here in Tyrifjorden we have everything we could wish for: The fjord where we swim, fish and cruise in our boat. If we want a change we travel to Norefjell or go for a berry-picking hike in Krokskogen. (Rie 1965)

We are informed that this is the owners' permanent summer residence. This might suggest that they have a strong attachment to the place. We also get the impression that they are content and thankful for their life at this place, a life close to the fjord, which invites a variety of activities. The owners also mention occasional excursions to other places in the region. It is interesting to note that day-trips to these places are currently common from the Oslo area. In this account, however, these places are portrayed as exceptions which might further suggest that most of time is spent in the local environment very close to their cabin.

The third owner is however not at all pleased with Norwegian summers and weather. "What is it that makes the Norwegian summers so great? (...) It has not been great at all for the last years. It has rather been a nightmare to sit indoors in the rainy weather with six girls. No, seven, I mean (referring to his wife)" (Rie 1965:13). Judging from the other representations subject to this analysis, the represented cabin is likely small and spartan, and thus not a good place for six energetic children.

The fourth cabin representation in this article features a female cabin owner who has partly built her own cabin. We get the impression that she spends a lot of time observing and reflecting over the beautiful view at her cabin: "Gråstein is situated in a magnificent pine forest with a splendid view over Drøbaksundet. It is in a way so right to wake up to the 'puff-puff' sounds [from boats] and waves" (Rie 1965). While she observes the landscape, the text suggests that her mind travels in space and time: "I don't mind that the glasses shake and fall over when big ships pass. There is an element of romance with boats that arrive from foreign ports with strange flags" (Rie 1965). The landscape is in this account understood as something to be observed. Still, at the same time, the landscape is associated with a pattern of tasks.

Have you helped (building the cabin) yourself? I helped when the girder was fastened and have never been so scared before in my whole life (...). Besides I have tidied up and carried stuff away. The toughest job has been to carry soil. I got it driven to the main road and have rolled and carried it down here. Four cubic meters of soil. (Rie 1965)

According to this account, the owner is occupied with hard work, despite being a woman. As in previous examples, we can also see a task-oriented understanding of the cabin landscape. In general, this representation of outdoors activities includes building a cabin, maintenance, and gardening. Another interesting nature representation of this

article is the author's question, why the owner wants a garden when she has got such lovely nature at her cabin:

I have always dreamt of a small garden plot. I would like to have redcurrant bushes and three gooseberry bushes and to sit and eat straight from the bush. It has been my dream ever since I was a little girl. It's easy to understand when you are raised in a city apartment (Rie 1965).

Here she has to defend cultivating the landscape. This might reflect a mentality that one should be happy with what one has got, especially if it is a piece of 'wild' and beautiful Norwegian nature. The owner has been living in the city for her whole life and owning a garden is a childhood dream. It seems the author can only sympathize. It is considered a Norwegian 'right' to be outdoors in the open air, and for many people the garden represents an escape from hectic everyday life in the city. The featured owner has not experienced owning a garden which becomes a legitimate 'excuse' for replacing 'untouched' Norwegian nature with a garden plot. Furthermore, the account ends on a piece of advice for other women who want to build a cabin: "Some good advice for women that want to get started building a cabin? Yes, do not start! You should instead invest in a bachelor that has already built one" (Rie 1965).

In short, all four real cabin representations in this article suggest that the landscape is associated with work and that life at the cabin is synonymous with outdoor tasks. Skills observed in this account include resisting temptation, creativity, patience, family relations and building a cabin. Like the other articles in this study, the mantra 'one takes what one has and makes the best out of it' (*Man tager det man haver*) is recurring.

Article 4: The Hiker and Cabin Ownership

In this article it is suggested that people who enjoy hiking should acquire a cabin before it is too late. The author argues that cabin villages are better for the owners and nature, as it is feared that there will soon be no more nature to enjoy:

In the end it appears to a hiker that to own or not to own a piece of land in Norway is the question that may soon determine how and if one can experience Norwegian nature and life in the open air, either in the mountains or by the sea (Kvaale 1965:14).

Understood in this statement is a perceived threat of other cabin owners who have bought their piece of land – and the fear of missing out on having the same. It seems to be a general agreement that everyone has the right to experience Norwegian nature, and that this right should be urgently protected. Again the representations of cabins show a connection to identity. Hikers are iconic on the landscape, and it is argued that they should be able to express this identity by acquiring a cabin if necessary (Kvaale 1965:18).

In return, the new cabin owner is guaranteed that no neighbors will ruin his enjoyment. The water sources are potable and the hiking trails allow unhindered access into the mountains. The transportation of fuel and groceries is jointly organized, the same with keeping the roads clear from snow during the winter season. (Kvaale 1965:18)

According to this description, by investing in a cabin located in a cabin village one is freed from insecurity: One receives good amenities and access to good hiking areas. Drawing on our taskscape framework, we can observe here that the cabin represents a platform for facilitating hiking. Moreover, the underlying message here is that hikers should acquire a cabin in a cabin village that does not ruin other hikers' opportunities to do the same. Here, the landscape at the cabin symbolizes free nature and is primarily a tourist attraction.

Article 5: The Anti-Cabin Mrs. Timiansen

In contrast to the other articles studied here, the following account features a parody of the cabin of a lady named Mrs. Timiansen who finds life at the cabin cumbersome and uncomfortable. The 'interviewer' assumes that Mrs. Timiansen is going to the cabin this Easter because she is "so lucky to have a cabin up at Krokskogen." But this is not the case:

Not this mom (refers to herself), no. I have just waved goodbye to the family. I am hoping to stay home alone and be comfortable with running cold and warm water and electric lights and a dishwasher and heat from the fireplace, TV and radio. And I will not set a foot outside any door! I will lay back, relax, and be cozy (Veronica 1966:13).

The article assures the readers that Mrs. Timiansen does not appreciate the simple lifestyle at her family cabin. On the contrary, she seems to dislike every aspect of staying there. Despite having an oven, the heating is also an issue:

Yes, (the oven helps) if the wood is dry. When we were at the cabin last year, the indoor temperature was 14 degrees (Celsius) indoors when we arrived. We stoked the fire very well, but still could not take off any layers of clothing. We had to stand with our warm clothes on and heat the food. (Veronica 1966:13)

Cold is here considered a precondition of discomfort, and is associated with not being able to relax and enjoy the holiday. And as it is cold and uncomfortable indoors, the whole cabin experience is deemed negative. In fact, this is the only article I studied, which portrays the outdoors as something negative. According to this narrative, going out in nature is a scary experience:

The fox has been raiding the food storage several evenings, so I had to follow Timiansen (her husband) out in nature in the evenings. Some people claim that a lynx has been observed close to our cabin, and I had the feeling we were sitting right next to its sharp claws (Veronica 1966:13).

Nature and wild animals especially are portrayed as unfamiliar and threatening. The darkness makes going outdoors frightening. This account associates the cabin with house work, struggle, effort and threats. Mrs. Timiansen would rather stay at home where she could have a relaxing holiday in her comfortable and more convenient home. This article features a parody of the housewife not fond of cabin life, yet these challenging aspects of cabin life might be recognizable to some. It becomes evident that Mrs. Timiansen experiences the divide between 'home' and 'cabin' differently than her husband who loves slow living at the cabin in nature, also here freed from house work. This article has four key aspects: (1) the cabin is associated with 'work' (cumbersome); (2) it is 'uncomfortable' (cold and unfamiliar) (3) outdoor life and nature is dangerous and scary; and (4) quality time with family is not mentioned. In short, the account provides few reasons for going to the cabin.

Some days later, an interesting reply to the article was sent by a reader and this reply features in *A-magasinet*:

Like many others I found Veronica's little article about Mrs. Timiansen and its notion of Easter at the cabin amusing. But I cannot avoid wondering

if Veronica is up-to-date. I myself go every Christmas and Easter to our little cabin in the mountains with my husband, four children and two dogs. My day at the cabin starts with a cup of delicious instant coffee in bed. This coffee is served by my husband who is on holiday and thinks life is wonderful when he gets to fiddle around in our own cabin surrounded by all his dear ones (Swensen 1966:20).

The large family presented here stays at their mountain cabin during winter holidays. In this piece, the husband is helpful and ensures that his wife gets relaxing mornings and days at the cabin. Her husband also appreciates life at the cabin as it offers relaxation and quality time with his family.

My four daughters, aged of six to fourteen, take turns with domestic tasks, so the food is served quickly and the dishes are done and the beds are made almost before the master of the house has had time to carry wood indoors and light the fireplace after the family's skiing excursion. We (...) get many long and nice hikes in the mountain. (Swensen 1966:20)

The above comment indicates that all members of the family cooperate to enjoy their time in the cabin. Furthermore, potential issues related to spartan standards are overcome with practical solutions: "Breakfast is served in our small, sunny eating corner where the table is covered with cardboard plates and cups and a pretty and practical oil cloth," and "After the hike the dinner is made in short time with the help of propane gas, delicious powdered soup and dried vegetables, instant potatoes and the steak that was prepared at our well-equipped city kitchen before our family went on holiday" (Swensen 1966:20). In other words, the cabin is a place where family members attend to one another in a relaxed environment.

When I think about expensive hotel vacations where adults and children are equipped with formal clothing and good manners – or for example Easter in the city where the school vacation often means sleeping away half the morning and the afternoon is 'killed' with a visit to the cinema or in front of the television – I am very grateful to observe the family's sunburnt and smiling faces in the glow of the fireplace while we enjoy family games or other forms of entertainment. (Swensen 1966:20)

The author feels gratitude when she can see her family members happy together. At this cabin as represented, family comes closer through a shared mission (to make the cabin as nice as possible), and the author seems happy with their holidays: "No, no-one can convince me that a housewife today needs to struggle with more than she wants, even

though she is at a relatively small and primitive cabin with a big family!” (Swensen 1966:20). The landscape is also here associated with a pattern of tasks. They go skiing and relax in front of the fireplace when they return. Yet, the cabin is not simply a platform for these experiences – it is a greater pattern of daily tasks that take place indoors and outdoors.

Article 6: “Holiday Together - or on Our Own?”

The next article, “Holiday together – or on our own?”, features a couple who appreciate family life at their cabin. They spend most holidays here together, but the husband expresses that he might also go for a climb: “But it might just be that I leave for a few days to climb a little bit on my own” (Kvaale 1966:19). In the meantime his wife visits family and sunbathes. At the cabin they also believe that women should get some time off housework.

At our cabin (...) it is practical to have two couples staying here in the summer holidays. I have a norm that cannot be compromised: All work indoors and outdoors, including cooking, doing the dishes or washing the floors, should be done by the men only (...). In this way [the wives] really get a holiday, a concept most housewives put in quotation marks (Kvaale 1966:19).

The cabin is a place to raise children, for quality time together as a family. At the cabin parents and grandparents can teach the children what they learned from their parents and grandparents.

It is clear that we have brought the children along whenever possible (...). It is in the holiday that one has time to take care of them, to teach them mountain fishing and sea fishing and the difference between viper and smooth snake and other vital things. Now our children have grown up and go their own ways, which do not always coincide with ours. In return we have grandchildren that we can bring to the cabin. At the same time it is demanding, to put it mildly. Yet, in short we are very happy with family holidays, where the conditions do not imply anything else. (Kvaale 1966:19).

This transmission of skill from older to younger generations is considered an important function of the cabin. Here they also develop dear memories together and maybe also re-live old memories with their own parents and grandparents. In this sense, the cabin functions as a time capsule. The cabin might also represent a passage into our natural

state of being. At the cabin one learns vital means of survival, useful for dwelling in nature. In this example there are several references to such activities, including recognizing animal species, hunting, and fishing. This includes different forms of observation and attention skills, and the ability to see the surrounding environment in different ways than they would have had in other places. The children seem to encourage exploration of the local environment. The cabin here represents a place where Norwegians learn how to return from urban homes to what is considered the original state of being, outdoors in harmony with nature.

Conclusions: Nature and Outdoor Experiences in Cabin Representations in *A-Magasinet* 1965/66

The most important finding there is that the landscape is associated with work, in other words the descriptions of life at the cabin correspond with the Dwelling Perspective. The landscape is in this sense experienced as an embodied taskscape. The cabin facilitates activities such as hiking and skiing, but first and foremost it is a place for slow living with simple means in harmony with nature, and this harmony is achieved (intentionally or not) through work. These accounts are also partly accounts of returning to, or revisiting origins (family, local community, nature, traditions). The cabin, as a place where one has time, is portrayed as task and person-oriented – one has time for tasks, family, local community and nature. The cabin is described as both a landscape and a structure in the landscape. There is a focus on the activities linked to the cabin. The cabin is more than the building: It is a structure that encourages a certain set of activities outdoors. In the above narratives, most tasks mentioned take place outdoors. But this is not always the case, one example being the first article where the owner enjoys the coziness of the indoors in contrast to the cold outside. It appears that the findings are weather and season dependent. As a whole, however, there are clear indications that the narratives of these articles communicate ways of dwelling in the landscape that are oriented around tasks in a familiar environment.

One can also observe a positive mind-set when it comes to effort. The mantra ‘one takes what one has got and makes the best out of it’ reappears also in this context. There is a joy and contentment in spartan ways of life, and efforts are rewarded. This might be connected with another observation, the moral aspect of cabin life in these texts. Effort and coping with simple means may be connected to ideas of the ‘good Norwegian’

living according to Nansenian and Naessian principles and supporting local ‘values.’ Furthermore, there seems to be a sense of accomplishment connected with challenge and effort. There are three main tendencies among the key skills inherent in the activities mentioned in the studied texts. The first is a tendency for slow living. The cabin owners appear present in the moment, people- and task-centered. This focus suggests that cabin life encourages attentiveness, creativity, contentment, care and patience. The second is an enjoyment of life at the threshold between nature and culture. The third is a tendency to do work at the cabin oneself rather than hiring help. The articles suggest that this creates a special attachment to the place. There also appears to be some gender role aspects of this – in some accounts families share the work, in others the men do most of or all the work. It is also fair to believe that such skilled work improves the ability to do similar work in the future and the place becomes more connected to this kind of work. In short, according to these accounts, the cabin represents a place where one dwells differently than at home.

4.3.2 Representations of Cabin Experience in 2013 – 2014

The following findings are extracted from representations of real cabins in two issues of *Hyttemagasinet*. The findings are presented categorically according to season (winter and summer). Here one issue is chosen to represent each season.

The Winter Season

To represent the winter season I have chosen *Hyttemagasinet* issue number 2, 2014 – the Easter issue. As mentioned earlier, Easter is in Norway synonymous with the beginning of ‘cabin season’, and is a prime time for skiing. In this issue there are five longer articles that discuss ‘real’ cabins.

The first cabin featured is owned by a sporty couple that we have seen in chapter three. The couple has used hired help to build and design the cabin and its interior. According to the article the couple loves racing on skis and regularly visits their cabin. Indeed, the owners hired an expert as they knew little about building a cabin, and would rather go skiing than to plan their cabin: “When you are used to counting kilometers and want as much time as possible for ski trails, one also wants ‘the cabin project’ to reach the finish-line quickly” (Fossan 2014:16); “If anything should be waxed it’s the skis, and

with a great amount of Vasalopp and Birkebeiner ski races on the record, the owners did not wish to trawl contractors and interior shops for cabin solutions” (Hyttemagasinet no.2 2014:17). In these comments there is also significant emphasis on achievements and results. There is focus on measurement, and activities are portrayed as goal-oriented: (The owners have achieved) “good results in Birken and at work (two prestigious ski races)” (Fossan 2014:19). The indoors is conceptualized as a comfortable and warm home base: “After a long day on skis, it is good to sit down in comfortable custom-made textile chairs” (Fossan 2014:19). Here one may note that the outdoors and indoors are considered separate arenas and are associated with different activities: Outdoors is for skiing and indoors is for resting and preparing for days on the trails.

Now about one year later, we would not have done anything different. This summer we spent a week here and travelled the Peer Gynt road by bike from Tretten and Hundorp to Gålå. A nice trip we will undoubtedly repeat, says Sven who also assures us that great distances will be traveled in the mountains on skis during the winter season. In fact, the couple thinks weekend trips to the cabin should entail at least 50-60 kilometers and that one should visit the cabin at least every fortnight. (Fossan 2014:21-24).

This statement shows that the owners often visit the cabin and that they spend a significant amount of time skiing. That they cover at least 50-60 km over a weekend suggests a dedication to skiing, and that the couple ski at a relatively fast pace. They are called “mile-eaters” and “sporty,” two labels with positive connotations of ‘accomplishment’ and ‘effort’ (Fossan 2014:26). The landscape is communicated as twofold: One comfortable indoor environment and one outdoor environment with great opportunities for skiing.

The owner of the cabin featured in the second article is from Denmark, but this does not keep him from visiting his cabin regularly. It is stated that the view and silence motivates him to go to his cabin: “Yet this Danish geologist crosses the Northern Sea as often as possible to enjoy the view and silence at 1030 metres height” (Henriksen 2014:32). The above statement also evokes an image of the landscape as something to be observed. These observations are connected with silence. There are more references to the owner’s fascination of the landscape: “He was introduced to the mountain area of Numedal thanks to a colleague that lured him with grouse hunting and wilderness at his wife’s place of origin” (Henriksen 2014:32); and “One cannot complain about the view over Hardangervidda. 50 metres down there are maintained ski trails leading into the

national park” (Henriksen 2014:38). However, nothing suggests that he actually utilizes these nature reserves. It is unknown whether the owner designed the place as a first home or a cabin, as he intends to move to the cabin when he retires. This statement indicates both ideas: “The intention is to settle here the day I retire. I could of course build a house, but these surroundings require a particular style of building” (Henriksen 2014:38). Yet, it seems that he feels at home and great attachment to the place. From the text and images we get the impression that the owner spends much time looking at the beautiful view from his living room. There are several words and sentences that are related to the view and nature as part of the interior (see previous chapter on this). Nothing is however mentioned about outdoor activities – only that he went grouse hunting in the area before he got an architect to build the cabin.

At the third cabin we are introduced to a family with a more ‘summerly’ cabin tradition: The first dip of the season: “When others arduously wax their skis, we start the swimming season” (Østmoe 2014:42). The tradition has however been modernized, as they now have a Jacuzzi that waits for them after a dip in the ocean.

This is the 10th time he opens the swimming season exactly on Easter Eve. The tradition began when Easter came late in April. At the beach the children run around excited and poorly dressed. They waded and splashed water at each other. Maybe I should also to go for a dip? It slipped out of [the owner]. His brother-in-law was not late to answer: Yes, if you will go for a dip then I will go too. This was before the age of the Jacuzzi. Now it stands ready-heated and waits for the Easter guests to take the year’s first dip, first in the sea, then in the tub (Østmoe 2014:44)

The sea water is cold and the Jacuzzi is warm. This makes the experience more comfortable. The dip is a tradition that should not be broken thus it seems smart to have a tub: “Late or early Easter, according to tradition, the first dip in the sea should take place on Easter Eve” (Østmoe 2014:55). Yet, the most interesting finding in this representation is that all the activities seem centered around the terrace. Especially important is social life, and these owners host a lot of guests. The indoors and outdoors are mixed. This is one of the articles that were used in the previous chapter to exemplify the tendency of bringing the outdoors inside. But these owners also mention that they bring the indoors outside. Everyone seems comfortable and the people in the images look very happy and relaxed. The landscape is here portrayed as something distant, separate from the cabinsphere, and few activities outside the terrace are mentioned.

The fourth article summarizes what the owners appreciate in their cabin: “The perfect distance from home, great view, good cabin neighbors, and a gorgeous hiking terrain draw us there as soon as leisure time is available. The weather has been a great success this winter” (“Drømmen fra A...” 2014:60). Furthermore, “there was a lot [the owners] liked. Including the terrace, which is built as a superstructure in the middle. As you know, the Norwegian mountains do not offer sunshine and dry moments every day, so it is nice to have a roof that provides shelter” (“Drømmen fra A...” 2014:60). In other words, the shelter of a covered terrace prevails over the harsh climate, and the owners can stay outdoors for longer. They also enjoy observing the landscape: “A view that gives a peace of mind that can hardly be described” (“Drømmen fra A...” 2014:61). Why is the mind peaceful in these surroundings? They enjoy numerous indoor activities and have the opportunity to do separate things: “We are very pleased to have a separate TV lounge of 13 square meters with a door. Then those who wish can watch TV, while others may enjoy a book in the living room without being disturbed” (“Drømmen fra A...” 2014:67). Here one might note two aspects of having a larger cabin. First, by making a separate TV room or area one can preserve the valuable ‘silence’ of the cabin. Second, such solutions also make it possible for family members to engage in different activities in different rooms of the building. The latter might suggest that the family spends less time together than if they were ‘forced’ to live in limited space. In short, it might be observed a less communal focus to activities and nature is in this article something ‘out there’ that one can either experience (hiking) or enjoy to observe from a sheltered terrace or indoors.

The fifth article does not share much information on the cabin experience as such. Yet, the cabin represents an example of nostalgia, a place that brings back memories of old days and a different place and environment: “The distance is not deterring, yet the place, climate and environment are quite different. It is in many ways like entering another time, a time when men were men and the boats went by sails” (“Stolt Fyr!” 2014:87). The cabin is also seen as a place to be social, and the owners frequently visit local cafés and host plenty of visitors. The landscape is associated with childhood memories and a beautiful view.

In the above articles the cabin represents a platform for (1) experiencing nature out on the trails, (2) observing the landscape, and (3) quality time with friends and family. A simplified image of these representations might consider the indoors to be associated

with comfort and nature observation and the outdoors as a place for organized forms of activity (skiing, first dip of the season, hiking). This would however be an overly simplistic conclusion, as there is more to the cabin experience. As an example, the cabin representations featured in the data set also refer to silence, peace and quiet, as motivations for going to the cabin. As previously mentioned this might indicate wishes for quality time with the immediate family and oneself. There is also a nostalgia associated with the cabin; this is especially visible in the statements on traditions. The owners featured in the examples above bring future generations to the cabin to teach them survival skills, to create new, and re-live old memories. Yet, the doorstep represents a distinct divide between the indoors and outdoors. In one of the examples the terrace replaces the doorstep. Social life (neighbors) is also mentioned in several of the above articles.

The Summer Season

Issue 5 2013 features three longer articles about ‘real’ private cabins and an supplementary special issue. In descriptions of activities we can observe that the terrace and the dock are at the center of these tales. We are introduced to idyllic summer days at cabins in the mountains and by the sea where life is lived outdoors on the terrace, dock whenever the sun is shining and there is no wind and rain. Some have also built shelters so that the indoors is brought outdoors. The articles inform us that the owners stay for a longer period of time in the summer than during winter, and we get the impression that they have a personal attachment to the place. The variety of activities mentioned includes swimming in the ocean, kayaking, sun bathing and spending whole days on the terrace or at the dock. The findings might also suggest that the activities are less organized activities than in the winter. A possible explanation for this is that the outdoors is more comfortable in the warm summer sun and the effort demanded for going out decreases. However, it seems like the terrace is so comfortable that people stay there to eat, socialize, enjoy the view, watch the children, and get some sun.

The first cabin is used frequently and might represent what is usually considered a summer house. They stay for eight weeks during the summer holiday and otherwise on weekends for the rest of the summer. We are introduced to their life at the cabin:

[The owner's] mother inherited the cabin in 1959, and he has spent every summer here in the mouth of the fjord ever since. In 1995 he inherited the place together with his two sisters, whose shares he later bought out. Now [the owner and his wife] and the three children fill the blank pages of the cabin diary with stories of cold morning dips, water sports, visitors, kayak trips, and lazy vacation life with family and friends (Bjurstrøm 2013:33).

This is one of the cabins that have a TV-lounge and they try to eat most meals outdoors. But first they have to follow the strict tradition of taking a dip in the sea: "The refreshing water serves as a shower, and a morning dip is mandatory for young and old: No breakfast without a dip" (Bjurstrøm 2013:34). They have their own dock and boat. They cite that the cabin brings up childhood memories of morning dips and fishing for mackerel. The cabin is also a place of thought and reflection: we get the impression that he opens a time capsule when he goes to the cabin, and that he associates the place with memories from his old childhood.

In the second article we are introduced to a cabin in the mountains and an owner that likes comfort at the cabin even though he might also go for a hike.

With a simple two-hour drive to get there, I spend a lot of time at the cabin. I am here two to three weekends a month and every single vacation. The winter is great, even though I do not care much for skiing. But in the summers the mountain is fantastic. I run, bike or go for a hike. Read a book, watch a film. Invite the neighbours over for a cup of coffee. Swim in mountain water. Fidget around at the cabin, and make a lot of great food, which is always served on a paper plate or napkin (Gleditsch 2013a:41-42).

Other statements suggest that the owner stays indoors when the temperature decreases or it is raining: "When one is at the cabin one should be comfortable, (the owner) argues. But it is mostly in the winters he sits in the living room" (Gleditsch 2013a:42); and "In the bedroom hangs the flat screen, popular amongst youngsters that would like to relax with a DVD or two. It's also useful on a rainy day" (Gleditsch 2013a:45). The article features an image of him at his terrace, and one gets the impression that the terrace is a dear place: "From next year it might get easier as the cabin owner dreams not only of a sauna and tub, but also a door from the living room out on the terrace" (Gleditsch 2013a:47).

This quote is another example of an emphasis on convenience in the articles of *Hyttemagasinet*. The terrace is a functional and practical platform between the indoors

and outdoors. We also learn that the owner consciously separates work time and free time: “(the owner) has mobile broadband, but seldom works from the cabin. It is important to keep work and leisure separate” (Gleditsch 2013a:45). The cabin is here associated with free time and work from everyday life in the city is not brought to the cabin. Furthermore, the owner comments that comfort is important for him at his cabin, and it might seem that recreation is for him synonymous with comfort. This comfort might make the cabin more similar to his city home but he has created his own way of dwelling at the cabin without having to leave ‘modernity’ behind (TV, internet, comfortable indoors). Moreover, life is lived at the heart of the cabin, the terrace – a meeting place between civilization and nature.

The same tendencies might be observed in a separate supplement to issue 5, 2013. This supplementary pamphlet introduces the reader to different types of small houses that can be built as an extension of the cabin. Most significant for this study is that these articles suggest that one should make it as easy as possible to be and go outdoors: “The owners wanted a beach house in the place where it was narrow, steep and difficult” and “these problems are known to many people: The cabin is situated at a small distance from the water, and during a summer there are way too many trips back and forth from the cabin with seating pillows, fuel cans, life vests, food and beverage. Who would prefer being at the cabin when the water is tempting just some meters away” (Agency 2013a:76). This statement represents a shift of focus from necessity (1960s) to modern convenience. It is considered a problem when life is not as convenient as possible. More statements support this observation: “Not least important is the dock that is built as an extension of the beach house” (Agency 2013a:76). A featured annex functions as a roof outdoors where one may “seek shelter from passing rain, or relax after a refreshing swim” (Agency 2013a:76). In one of the articles we are presented with a house which is built with bars to provide a shelter outdoors, the article mentions that this solution allows the owners to enjoy the view without feeling the wind (Agency 2013b:77). Another article features a couple that uses their annex as a place to eat outdoors: “Subject to weather reservations: It is not every day the whole summer that the weather allows for a cozy moment at the dock (...). But when the weather is at its best and the wind keeps calm there is no better place to be” (“Kosekrok...” 2013:79). Also, a representation of the cabin in this special pamphlet features a family that appreciates the good life at the dock to its fullest in “a sea shed with a living room, kitchen, shower and sauna at only 20m²,

right by the sea” (Nilsson 2013:83). Indeed, they like it so much that they decided to move in: “We wanted a different beach house, a “future house” where there is room to cook, host guests and leave the children alone” (Nilsson 2013: 84); “The boat house has become so popular that the children succeeded with a suggestion to pack our bags and move down from the holiday house to the sea shed ‘on vacation’” (Nilsson 2013:86). This tale suggest that they do not spend much time indoors in the summers: “Short travelled *kos*: The main cabin is located up the stairway, but the summer days are spent on the dock no matter what” (Nilsson 2013:86). All the examples above utilize the terrace or dock as a platform for experiencing outdoor life. The landscape is a view beyond this platform that invites discovery. This understanding of the landscape as something that can be observed is also seen in the article “At one with nature: In the archipelago of Stockholm.” Although the headline suggests that the owner is “at one with nature” it is not evident how as there are no clear indications that nature is experienced outdoors. Instead one may find the following statement: “Inspired: Carita has found a place where her creativity can run free, totally undisturbed” (Vallstrand 2013:88). The article features magnificent pictures of an atelier built with natural wood with and large windows that provide a fantastic view. Indoors, it is warm and comfortable so that the artist can observe the view without losing concentration by getting cold. Nature is experienced as something distant and beautiful that can be observed from the studio.

Conclusions: Nature Experiences as Portrayed in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013 – 2014)

In the articles discussed above, cabins in the winter season represent a platform for: (1) experiencing nature in ‘untouched’ wilderness, sometimes at the threshold between nature and civilization: the terrace; (2) observing the landscape from the cabin; and (3) quality time with friends and family. A simplified image of these representations might consider the indoors to be associated with comfort and nature observation, and the outdoors as a place for effort, but mostly in play and pleasure associated with organized activities (skiing, first dip of the season, hiking). The articles do however also refer to silence, peace and quiet, as motivations for going to the cabin. As previously mentioned this might indicate a wish for quality time. There is also a nostalgia associated with the cabin; this is especially visible in the statements on traditions. The owners featured in

the examples above bring future generations to the cabin to teach them vital skills and to create new and re-live old memories. The cabin is portrayed as an intergenerational experience, and in the same way as the cabin itself is passed on from generation to generation, so are the experiences. In these representations, the doorstep represents a distinct divide between the indoors and outdoors.

In the summer issue of *Hyttemagasinet*, the doorstep mile seems less apparent, yet it seems like its function is extended to the terrace or dock. Moreover, outdoor life is mentioned frequently. These activities are mainly of two categories: (1) life in the open air (*friluftsliv*) connected to specific hiking areas or activities or (2) slow living at the terrace or dock. It is also interesting to note that the cabin is divided into zones: The indoors (looking at the view, reading, cooking, sitting in front of the fireplace, entertainment, house work etc.), the terrace or dock (relaxing, enjoying the view, socializing, grilling), the garden or local landscape (less frequently mentioned), and wilderness (organized activities such as sports). As a conclusion, there is a shift of focus from work (necessity) in the 1960s to comfort (convenience) in current times. These findings correlate with the findings in the previous chapter. In other words, this research suggests that there is a connection between the featured cabin buildings and the activities mentioned in these cabin representations.

4.4 A Rite of Passage: Nature in Modern Cabin Representations

It is interesting to study the cabin life as a ‘rite of passage’ from a stage of separation from nature to a landscape-oriented ‘harmony’ with nature. Arnold van Gennep first introduced the term to represent the movement from one status in life to another. He identified three main steps of this process: (1) separation; (2) marginal or liminal rites (threshold); and (3) aggregation (Van Gennep 1960). In the context of the cabin, the first may refer to the Norwegian in a state of separation from nature. To find the way back to his ‘original place’ in the world (nature), he goes to the cabin. The cabin functions as a threshold (period of isolation), and leads him to the third state, which is a feeling of harmony with nature. Applied to my findings from the 1960s representations of cabins, the ‘rite of passage’ goes as follows: (1) separation, life at home brings one in less harmony with nature than at the cabin (2) the cabin is used at a threshold to (3)

restore this harmony by encouraging a task-oriented dwelling in the landscape. Here the doorstep does not represent a threshold. The simple (and uncomfortable) character building makes it desirable and 'obvious' that life should be lived in one landscape embedding both the indoors and the outdoors. If we go through the 'rite of passage' as represented in *Hyttemagasinet*, one can observe an interesting difference: (1) At first there is a recognized separation between man and nature. There is a wish to seek peace and quiet and closeness to nature; (2) second, the cabin functions as a threshold by its proximity to beautiful nature areas, yet the structure makes life comfortable and there is a tendency to spend time on the terrace: a comfortable and convenient platform for experiencing life outdoors. Thus one may argue that the threshold to nature is situated at the doorstep (winter) and the terrace or dock (summer). Moreover, in many ways the terrace functions as a 'rite of passage' into nature, the only confusing aspect of this allegory is (3) the fact that there is not necessarily a stage of aggregation as such. The terrace as a symbol of a safe shore for nature experiences seems to imply that most time is spent at the terrace and not 'out' in the landscape beyond the structure of the cabin and terrace or 'untouched' nature – unless it is for organized activities. The terrace was also present in *Bonytt* in the 1960s, yet today it is the focus of attention, whereas in *Bonytt* the terrace was a requisite of outdoor living with the rest of the landscape at a slow, task-oriented pace. Here the terrace might be a practical place, but it does not carry any deeper meaning. I argue that symbolically, although previously this 'rite of passage' was the cabin building itself, the cabin building is today more similar to 'home' in the city, and the 'old' 1960s cabin is replaced with the doorstep, terrace or dock.

Here two different ways of understanding nature can be identified. In the 1960s 'nature' is not portrayed as 'unfamiliar' or 'separate' from the cabin building (with the exception of the article on Mrs. Timiansen), but inherent in the cabin life itself as part of the same task-oriented landscape. Moreover, selections from *A-magasinet* and *Bonytt* associate the landscape with work. The landscape is portrayed as set of features that embody a pattern of tasks. The landscape is also referred to as a view that may be cherished, but this experience is hardly ever explicitly mentioned. In *Hyttemagasinet* (2013 – 2014), however, the latter understanding of the landscape seems to be standard. Moreover, in *Hyttemagasinet* there is a contrast between cherishing the landscape from the indoors, and experiencing the 'landscape' or 'nature' with sports, play and other activities. Here

the indoors and the outdoors are represented as two separate arenas – nature is something ‘out there,’ with the landscape in contrast to the indoors. The cabin represents a facilitator for outdoor experiences and the ‘landscape’ is considered separate from the building. Work is not frequently mentioned. This might suggest that the cabin is less associated with a taskscape today than in the 1960s. The fact that the study by Kaltenborn *et al.* (2005) does not include activities related to work (only sports and leisure) in their expansive study of cabin owner perceptions supports this observation. Furthermore, the articles emphasize attempts to bring ‘nature’ indoors, but this might be problematic as ‘nature’ is portrayed as conceptually separate from the indoor environment. Symbolically, nature is associated with the ‘beautiful,’ yet simultaneously, with the ‘outside,’ the ‘unknown,’ and the ‘separate.’ This contrasts with *Bonytt* where these ideas exist but the main relation to nature is perceived as taking part in a landscape of relations. This ‘alienation’ from ‘nature’ can refer to the process where ‘nature’ and the ‘landscape’ have moved ‘out’ of the cabin. What is mostly represented in terms of one single landscape in *Bonytt* is in *Hyttemagasinet* two landscapes: the artificial (the cabin) and the natural (outdoors). There is in other words a shift from understanding the cabin as located *in* nature to the cabin as located *in closeness to* nature. I argue that while in the accounts of *Bonytt* the cabin tends to orientate towards a dwelling perspective, the cabin in *Hyttemagasinet* is seen in terms of a modern home. Furthermore, this is interesting to study in relation to the narratives in the previous chapter. While the articles in *Bonytt* (1963) look critically at the cabin from the outdoor perspective, in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014), the narrative is commonly situated from the living room angle – looking at the outdoors ‘landscape.’ The very images of the front pages of *Hyttemagasinet* exude this image (Figure 14).



Figure 14: Front pages *Hyttemagasinet* 2013 – 2014 (facsimile).

The findings of this study indicate a shift of mindset related to the arrival of modern technology, comfort and luxury at the cabin. It also suggests that the overall patterns of activity are different in the two periods of time studied. There seems to be a connection between how nature is portrayed and the experiences analyzed in this chapter. This connection highlights the importance of attaining more knowledge on the material

agency of the cabin. The descriptions of the cabin building connect to a great extent with the way cabins are used according to the studied accounts, whether that be using the cabin as a facilitator for sport-related activities or focusing on a more relation and task-oriented slow living. The cabin is portrayed as an independent agent, a partner of humans. As embodied agency, the design of the cabin might influence relations at the cabin.

Representations of cabins from 2013 to 2014 in *Hyttemagasinet* are focused on the indoor environment: The interior should be up-to-date, stylish and convenient, just like ‘home’ in the city, with a hint of cabin inspired elements. One brings memory, habits and routines from ‘home’ in the city into the cabin-sphere. This chapter identified two main aspects of experiences represented in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013 – 2014): (1) the outdoor activities mentioned tend to be situated at the terrace or dock – or in wilderness as with organized activities – and (2) indoors is a comfortable place often associated with activities like cooking, observing the view, relaxing, reading a book, watching television and gathering around the fireplace. In other words, it is similar to life at ‘home’ in the city. It seems like the global market and international mass culture has ‘invaded’ the taskscape by introducing appliances and technology to cabins. In these terms, cabin building cannot be seen separately from the activities and narratives it facilitates. It becomes clear that the ‘individual’ consumer might not have unilateral agency in shaping the way he or she dwells at the cabin. It is therefore relevant to question whether it is possible to be more conscious of material possessions and their embodied agency. I argue that we need more knowledge on the agency of material possessions, and a relation-oriented evaluation of the materials we choose to bring into our lives – including at the cabin. A study conducted by *Hytteliv* demonstrates that cabin owners that are most happy with their cabin are those with relatively high standard (water and electricity) and those with a low standard (without water or electricity) (Stene-Johansen 2014). This indicates that those who have taken a conscious choice are most happy with life at their cabin, and that those who for different reasons made a choice might not have financial means to or the opportunity to upgrade their cabin. As previously mentioned, consumer choice is not always rational and we need to be more aware of the effects of technology.

The abovementioned findings suggest that the cabin has developed into a second home. Here it is interesting to note that ‘home’ carries a rich meaning in Norwegian culture,

and in many ways signifies the way nature is conceptualized as part of modern life. As Gullestad observes “in the opposition home/outside, home represents the protected, the secure and cosy (and perhaps at times, the boring?), Outside stands for the exciting, the dangerous or demanding” (translated by Witoszek 2011:127).²³ While agreeing with this duality, Witoszek argues that Gullestad overlooks the Norwegian idea of ‘home’ in nature: The fact that nature is considered to be the origin of Norwegian national identity. As I have attempted to demonstrate in this thesis, both in the representations from the 1960s and today the cabin is a place for returning to one’s origins and nature is the main aspect of this experience. As presented in the introduction, the cabin tradition can be understood as a national mission to go back to local origins and nature in a two-fold way: (1) The cabin symbolizes an escape from life in the cities. The latter being associated with ‘stress,’ ‘claustrophobia,’ ‘formal relations,’ and ‘anxiety’; (2) Yet, the cabins in *Hyttemagasinet* simultaneously represent the exact opposite: a continuation of domestic life in the city in proximity to nature. Unlike the 1960s cabin, which was considered to be located *in* nature as a part of a greater landscape, today’s cabin as represented in *Hyttemagasinet* is symbolically located at the *threshold* to nature. The cabin is still different to ‘home’ in the city in two ways: (1) It is located close to nature and provides a platform for nature experiences; and (2) the cabins life represents renewal and an opportunity for recreating a ‘home’ that is different to the ‘home’ in the city. Whereas in the articles from the 1960s ‘freedom’ was associated with life in the open air (*friluftsliv*), freedom in *Hyttemagasinet* is represented by renewal and nature as two separate arenas of leisure and recreation.

4.5 Conclusions: Re-Conceptualizing the Cabin

My thesis suggests the need for re-conceptualizing the cabin as part of modernity. A relation-oriented understanding the cabin in terms of the experiences and relations it fosters may be more useful than regarding the cabin as a static concept, resilient to all kinds of ‘intrusions.’ The cabin is not necessarily an escape from everyday life. Instead, the cabin should be seen as a place that offers other ways of experiencing the environment than life at ‘home’ in the city. It is not useful to classify the cabin as a product of ‘nature’ and the home in the city as civilization. Instead, the changes in

²³ Original wording: «I ordparet hjemme/ute står hjemme for det lune, trygge, koselige (og kanskje litt kjedelige?). Ute står for det spennende og litt farlige eller anstrengende» (Gullestad as translated by Witoszek 2011:127).

representations cabins in *Hyttemagasinet* show that the urban and modern culture has ‘invaded’ the cabin, and the cabin no longer represents the trope of closeness between man and nature. These developments are understandable as socio-economic developments as well as necessary dynamics of the cabin as a meme – an idea subject to constant renewal. The fact that cabins attract new generations of Norwegians suggests that the cabin idea is still longed for in modern Norway. The mythos of the cabin mythos my research suggests that cabins are still experienced as a meeting place between ‘man’ and ‘nature’ in Norway and that cabins are still longed for in modern Norway. Such a vision includes a warning: With new consumption patterns in mind, if we wish to preserve cabins as a national meme that brings us ‘closer to nature’, this process may demand effort and attentiveness. I suggest that understanding the cabin in terms of experiences and relations might contribute to an increased awareness of the evolution of the cabin meme in modern Norway.

5 Conclusions

This thesis has explored the relations between cabins, nature and Norwegian identity by offering a semiotic analysis of representations of cabins in selected magazines: a cabin issue of *Bonytt* (1963), six articles in *A-Magasinet* (1964-67) and three issues of *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014). I pose the following research question: What is the role of nature in Norwegian mass media cabin representations in the 1960s and today (2013-14)? To answer this question the thesis assessed the following sub-questions: How has the meaning of the cabin evolved since the 1960s? Which tendencies associated with activities and outdoor life can be observed in cabin representations? How is nature represented in these texts? What do these findings suggest in terms of the wider context of modern Norway, cabins and nature?

The main finding of this thesis is that the representation of nature as part of the cabin experience is different in the media from the 1960s and today (2013-2014). Moreover, in the former, nature is inherent in the understanding of the cabin as part of a landscape that includes nature, and where nature is experienced through tasks. In the latter, nature is portrayed as an outdoors experience for specific activities in contrast to being indoors. Nature is thus represented as ‘beautiful’ yet ‘distant,’ ‘separate,’ and ‘unfamiliar.’ An interrelated observation is that the design of cabins and the related concepts featured in these representations have changed radically since the 1960s, Norway’s “Golden Age” of cabins (Rees 2014:117).

In a historical survey of cabins in Norwegian culture since 1814, chapter 2 found that the concept of an ‘ideal’ cabin has changed since the post-war period. Today there are two competing stories – one of lonely men living primitively in nature and one of modern luxury ‘cabin palaces.’

Chapter 3 noted tendencies, which suggested that the cabin as a building features different characteristics in *Bonytt* (1963) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014). An interesting observation here is that in *Bonytt* the cabin should be adjusted to nature, whereas in *Hyttemagasinet* nature should enter the cabin. Furthermore, the two magazines inherit two distinct orientations of narrative: The focus has changed from outdoors, critically studying the cabin and how it fits in the terrain, to indoors, looking out at the landscape. These preliminary conclusions were drawn as research showed

several shifts in preference: the desire for ‘small’ cabins has been replaced by ‘large’ ones; the ideal of ‘simplicity’ has been supplanted by ‘luxury,’ almost anything ‘old’ has been updated with something ‘new,’ ‘comfort’ is more desirable than ‘spartan’ in cabins, and the ‘rough’ is refined to ‘perfection.’ An additional observation made in this analysis is that cabins represent a social arena in *Hyttemagasinet*, whereas in *Bonytt* cabins mainly represent a place for family. This observation might signify that cabins are more similar to ‘home’ in the city in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014), which in turn points to globalizing trends of Norwegian culture since the 1960s.

These findings correspond strongly with the tendencies identified in cabin representations of nature experiences in chapter 4. Here the articles from the 1960s paint an image of landscapes as a taskscapes: the cabin and its ‘surrounding’ nature is part of the same landscape, whilst in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014) there seems to be a clear divide between the indoors and outdoors. In symbolic terms the latter representations of nature represents a ‘distant,’ ‘separate,’ and ‘unfamiliar’ outdoor landscape where nature might be observed from a distance or experienced through organized activities. This reveals a shift in focus from work (necessity) (1960s) to comfort (convenience) (2013-2014).

The most important observation in the articles from *A-Magasinet* (1964-67) is that nature is inherent in the cabin experience through a task- and relation-based orientation to the landscape. These preliminary conclusions are based on tendencies, which indicate that the cabin landscape is associated with work and other activities outdoors, with the cabin representing a place where one dwells differently than at ‘home’ in the city. According to these accounts, the cabin facilitates activities such as hiking and skiing, but first and foremost it is a place for slow living with simple means in harmony with nature. This harmony is connected with work outdoors. The articles suggest that such activities are understood to create a special attachment to the place. In other words, the cabin is more than the building: It is a landscape with a structure (building) that encourages a certain set of activities outdoors. In these representations, life is lived at a ‘slow’ pace at the threshold between nature and culture *in* a cabin landscape that is experienced by tasks in relation to nature.

In the representations of *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014) my study found that activities fall into three main categories: (1) observing the landscape from the cabin, (2) life in the

open air (*friluftsliv*) connected to specific hiking areas or activities; and (3) slow living on the terrace or at the dock. Furthermore, the cabin-sphere is represented as having separate zones: the indoors (looking at the view, reading, cooking, sitting in front of the fireplace, entertainment, house work etc.), the terrace/dock (relaxing, enjoying the view, socializing, barbequeing), the garden or local landscape (less mentioned), and wilderness (organized activities such as sports). These findings seem to correlate with the results from the previous chapter. In other words, these findings suggest that there is a connection between the featured cabin buildings and the activities mentioned with these representations. Symbolically, nature is associated with what is ‘beautiful,’ while at the same time, it has connotations of the ‘outside,’ the ‘unknown,’ and the ‘separate.’ This contrasts with the cabin representations of *Bonytt* (1963) where the main relation to nature is perceived as taking part in a landscape of relations. This ‘alienation’ from ‘nature’ might refer a process where ‘nature’ and the ‘landscape’ have moved ‘out’ of the cabin. What is mostly represented in terms of one landscape in *Bonytt* is in *Hyttemagasinet* two landscapes: the artificial (the cabin) and the natural (outdoors). There is, in other words, a shift from understanding the cabin as located *in* nature to the cabin as located *in proximity to* nature. I argue that while the cabin in the accounts of *Bonytt* is orientated towards the Dwelling Perspective, in *Hyttemagasinet* the cabin is represented in terms of a modern ‘home’ and hence a commodity perspective. Yet, as discussed in this chapter, cabins represent an ongoing negotiation between the two perspectives. These representations might indicate that one perspective is more prevalent than the other. I suggest that cabins are expressions of a wider socio-cultural development in Norway in recent decades. There were exceptions to my observations, yet I observed clear patterns of conceptual oppositions. However, what in the 1960s were only visions of future development have now been realized as more modern, luxurious and cosmopolitan cabins, as observed in contemporary media. Both *Bonytt* and *Hyttemagasinet* are interior-oriented magazines. This suggests that the cabin is less associated with a taskscape today than it was in the 1960s. However, one should be careful in drawing conclusions, as *Hyttemagasinet* is a interior-oriented magazine while *A-magasinet* is a generic weekend magazine of a newspaper. Accounts point towards a pietistic, post-war mentality and austerity in the media from the 1960s. Yet, one should be aware of how the media represents the perceptions of ‘real’ cabin owners, as the findings of my study are on the ‘meta’ level. It should also be taken into account that the current mass media have significant bias and influence from markets. All sources for

this study featured ads, and it is unknown as to how the market has influenced the content, focus and rhetoric, especially as *Bonytt* and *Hyttemagasinet* are special interest magazines and might rely more on funding through advertising and retail or subscriptions from a smaller group of special-interest readers than *A-magasinet*, which is part of a large newspaper. Furthermore, with increasingly globalized media and online social media, I question whether the media from today might be pressured to present a glorified and glossy image of cabins. It is also unknown, whether the readers are aware of this or read about cabin life in other magazines. Today there is a broad selection of magazines in Norwegian media, and life in the open air and other aspects of cabin life are often featured in other magazines (e.g. *Fjell og Vidde* and *UTE*).

My Findings and Other Existing Research on Nature and Cabins

Arne Naess was ahead of me in predicting a changing understanding of the cabin and nature in the 21st century. As Naess observed, cabin culture today seems to be more concerned with the building itself whereas cabins in the post-war period were often understood in terms of their environmental surroundings (Naess 2008). My study gives further evidence and insight into literature illustrating the transition in Norwegian cabin culture in (1) consumption patterns (Haugen 2008, Støa *et al.* 2011, Vittersø 2007, Berker *et al.* 2011, Gransmo *et al.* 2011) and (2) the Norwegian mindset towards nature. I am not the first to identify a change in mindset from a traditional altruistic “Norwegian” experience towards a continentally inspired upper-class summer house experience of conspicuous consumption – from the simple to the comfortable (Aall 2011:123). What I have challenged in my study is a tendency to study nature as the main motivation for cabin ownership without questioning the evolution of nature as part of life at cabins. While their studies show important aspects of cabin culture, my contribution highlights other aspects of cabin representations in the media. This includes the observation that the way in which nature is understood and experienced is represented differently in the selected media from the 1960s and today. In fact, Kaltenborn *et al.* (2005) do not even include activities related to work (only sports and leisure). Arnesen and Skjeggestad observe that cabins are places for identity construction in free time as part of a commodity perspective (Arnesen and Skjeggestad in Berker *et al.* 2011). As presented by Berker *et al.*, this perspective makes the cabin “just another free time activity” (2011:170). By studying cabin representations of the

1960s my study highlights the absence of these activities in contemporary representations of cabins.

The findings of this thesis might indicate that more interdisciplinary research on relations between cabins, Norwegians and nature could be fruitful. My study also indicates that studying cabins in the 21st century might explore deeper aspects of Norwegian culture, including understandings of nature. There is scholarly disagreement on the importance of the cabin in a time of global environmental issues, but my study emphasizes the importance of studying material agency and ways of dwelling in modernity. In this sense, my study of representations of ‘cabins’ is related to literature on broader topics such as ‘consumption,’ ‘well-being,’ ‘nature,’ and ‘modernity.’

The Implications of my Findings

Finally, I hope the findings offered in this study will contribute to a better awareness of the evolution of cabins and Norwegian culture. The main objective has been to elaborate the multiple understandings of nature that follow this evolution. This has been done by analyzing how cabins appear in the media and what these representations might reveal about the changes in Norwegians’ relations to nature over the last century. Although the representations of cabin in *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014) indicate that cabins have changed since the time of Arne Naess and Fridtjof Nansen, this thesis highlights the cabin’s importance in contemporary Norwegian culture. This thesis finds that the cabin is a concept that is constantly subject to reinvention, and my findings suggest that cabins are influenced by more than ‘tradition’ (which figures in the title of my thesis). By applying an alternative theoretical framework to understanding modern life as a negotiation between the dwelling and commodity perspective, in my data I found a connection between the representations of building structure and representations of ways of dwelling in the environment in these accounts. Hence, my findings indicate that the materiality of the cabin and the way cabins are conceptualized symbolize central aspects in Norwegian culture and society in the 20th and 22nd centuries. My main observation is that the way nature is understood differ in *Bonytt* (1963)/*A-magasinet* (1964-67) and *Hyttemagasinet* (2013-2014). Symbolically, the former two portray cabins *as part of* landscapes (tasksapes) where nature is inherent in the cabin experience, whilst the latter represent cabins *in closeness to* landscapes that can be experienced as scenery or sport and play ‘out’ in nature. In broad terms, this finding

might indicate an evolution of nature representations from tales of 'harmony with nature' to visions of 'closeness to nature from a distance'. These findings are at a 'meta' level and must be understood as such. Yet, I hope my findings can offer better insight in terms of Norwegian understandings of nature and contribute to a broader generic discourse of dwelling in modernity.

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